

HEROIN

Other names:

smack, horse, mud, junk, brown sugar, black tar, big H, dope

How it is used:

injected, smoked, or inhaled

What it looks like:

white to dark brown powder or tar-like substance

Heroin is a highly addictive drug derived from morphine, which is obtained from the opium poppy. It is a "downer" that affects the brain's pleasure systems and interferes with the brain's ability to perceive pain. Heroin can be used in a variety of ways, depending on user preference and the purity of the drug.

Heroin can be:

- injected into a vein ("mainlining")
- injected into a muscle
- smoked in a water pipe or standard pipe, mixed in a marijuana joint or regular cigarette
- inhaled as smoke through a straw, know as "chasing the dragon"
- inhaled as powder via the nose

What it Does: Heroin is a fast-acting drug, especially when injected or smoked. Injected heroin reaches the brain in 15 or 30 seconds; smoked heroin reaches the brain in 7 seconds. The high from heroin is experienced as intense pleasure. Once a person begins using heroin, they quickly develop a tolerance to the drug and need more and more to get the same effects.

Effects on the mind and body:

- slowed and slurred speech
- slow gait
- constricted pupils, droopy eyelids, impaired night vision
- dry skin, itching, skin infections
- vomiting (at first use, and later at high doses)
- constipation
- "nodding off" (at very high doses)
- decreased sexual pleasure, indifference to sex
- sedation proceeding to coma
- respiratory depression
- HIV or hepatitis from injection
- can impair immune system
- addiction
- reduced appetite
- slow, irregular heart rate
- menstrual irregularity
- death from overdose

Support Groups in Lancaster County:

Alcoholics Anonymous (717) 394-3238
Narcotics Anonymous (717) 393-4546
Al-Anon (for family & friends) (877) 298-5027



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