

Heroin



diacetylmorphine

WHAT IS HEROIN?

- Heroin ("smack", "junk", "dope") is made from the opium poppy. It belongs to a class of drugs known as opiates, along with opium and morphine.
- Heroin can come in a white or brownish powder (sometimes grainy) or a dark brown substance (sometimes sticky) known as tar.
- Heroin bought on the street almost always contains "cuts" (adulterants), and is rarely pure. Because Heroin has a street value of its own, it is not used as a "cut" for Ecstasy pills.

HOW IS HEROIN USED?

- Heroin is snorted, "chased" (smoked), or injected.
- When injected, all of the heroin enters the blood stream at once, increasing the risk of overdose. Snorting and "chasing" can also lead to an overdose.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- Addiction is a risk of heroin use, whether you are snorting, "chasing", or injecting.
- Because purity and individual tolerance vary, overdose is a risk.
- Sharing injection equipment runs the risk of HIV and Hepatitis infection.
- Heroin injectors also run the risk of bacterial infections.
- Possession and sale of heroin can carry stiff penalties including incarceration and loss of Student Aid.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

- Heroin users often report feelings of warmth, well being, euphoria, and contentment.
- Since opiates are painkillers, heroin can reduce or eliminate pain. It can also lead to unconsciousness.
- Negative side effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation, itchiness, and slowed breathing.

HEROIN HARM REDUCTION TIPS

- It is possible to overdose on heroin by itself, although most drug overdoses occur when a person is using more than one substance or using after a break. If you are using from a new bag or if you have not used in a while, use a small test amount before using more.
- If someone stops breathing, has no pulse, or turns blue call 911 immediately. Tell the 911 operator- "someone has stopped breathing" and begin artificial breathing. Because there are antidotes to opiate overdoses, when the paramedics arrive tell them exactly what the person used.
- It is important to use a sterile syringe and clean injecting equipment. Use clean water when preparing to inject, and a clean surface to prepare your shot on. Clean the injection site with an alcohol pad or anti-bacterial soap. Don't share needles, cookers, cotton filters, water, or alcohol pads.
- Clean injection supplies can be obtained from a Syringe Exchange Program and sometimes at a pharmacy. Information is available from your local health department, AIDS prevention program, or DSUSA@DanceSafe.org.

DanceSafe

Promoting Health and Safety within the Rave and Nightclub Community

