



**DEA**  
Drug  
Enforcement  
Administration



## The Truth About

# Heroin

Heroin is an illegal and highly addictive drug.



### What is heroin?

- It is an opiate drug processed from morphine, a substance extracted from certain poppy plants.
- It appears as a white or brownish powder or a black sticky substance, known as black tar heroin.

### Street Names

Big H, Black Tar, H, Horse, Junk, Ska, Smack, Thunder

### How is it used?

- It is injected with a needle, smoked or snorted.
- Those who inject heroin **risk infectious diseases** such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, liver or kidney disease.

### What are the health effects of heroin?\*

- It is **addictive both psychologically and physically**. About 23% of persons who use it become dependent. It can slow down breathing. Overdoses can be fatal.
- Chronic users may develop collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, liver or kidney disease.

\*Source: [drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov)

## True or False?

- Heroin is less dangerous if you snort or smoke it. **False**

Fact: There is **no safe** way of using it. You can still **die from an overdose** or become addicted by snorting or smoking it.

- Stopping heroin use is easy. **False**

Fact: Withdrawal from heroin produces drug cravings, restlessness, muscle and bone pain, chills, nervousness, diarrhea, vomiting, and other symptoms that last about a week or months.

## Did you know?

- Some people report taking heroin because it is cheaper and easier to obtain than prescription opioids.  
*<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>*
- The vast **majority of teens do not use** heroin. In a 2014 national survey, only 0.5% used heroin in the past year. *Source: University of Michigan, 2014 Monitoring the Future Study.*
- **79.8% of teens think** using heroin weekly is very risky. *Source: SAMHSA, 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).*
- Recent trends indicate that heroin use is increasing for persons 18 years of age and older. In 2012, 669,000 persons reported past year use which increased to 681,000 in 2013.  
*Source: SAMHSA, NSDUH 2013. CBHSQ report 4-23-15.*
- In 2013, 6,000 teens received treatment for heroin addiction; 128,000 young adults (18-25) received treatment for heroin.  
*Source: SAMHSA, NSDUH 2013. CBHSQ report 4-23-15.*

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DEA



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GetSmartAboutDrugs.com



*For parents*

JustThinkTwice.com



*For teens*