



Heroin Facts

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Description:

Highly addictive synthetic opiate, illegal/illicit
White or brown powder
Black sticky substance (“black tar heroin”)

Abuse Methods:

Snorting
Injection
Smoking

Affects on the Brain: Converts to morphine in the brain, binding to opioid receptors, affecting the user’s perception of reward and pain. Opioid receptors in the brain stem regulate breathing, blood pressure, and arousal. After the initial euphoria, alternating states of alertness and drowsiness occur (“on the nod”). Increasing doses to overcome tolerance developed from repetitive use increases the abuser’s risk of harmful physiological and psychological effects.

Possible Negative Health Affects: Fatal overdose, spontaneous abortion, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS amongst intravenous users, infection of valves and lining of heart, pneumonia, damage to vital organs from toxic additives clogging blood vessels.

Additional Dangers: Physical dependence of infants born to heroin addicted mothers, fatality amongst users in poor health withdrawing from heroin quickly