

SIGNS OF A HEROIN OVERDOSE INCLUDE:

- Shallow breathing
 - Very small eye pupils
 - Cool, sweaty skin
 - Convulsions (shaking)
 - Coma
- ✓ Because street heroin is often "cut" with other drugs, users may not know the strength of the drug.
- ✓ Heroin can be deadly.
- ✓ If you think someone has overdosed on heroin, **call 911**.
- ✓ Naloxone is a medicine that can reverse a heroin overdose.
- ✓ If someone you know is using heroin, talk to a doctor or pharmacist about having naloxone on hand, just in case.

HEROIN ADDICTION CAN BE TREATED

- ✓ To get help with addiction talk to your health care provider, or look online at samhsa.gov



Using heroin has serious health consequences. Look inside to see how much damage heroin can cause to your body – and to your life. For more information, visit www.drugabuse.gov on the Internet.

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This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care.
If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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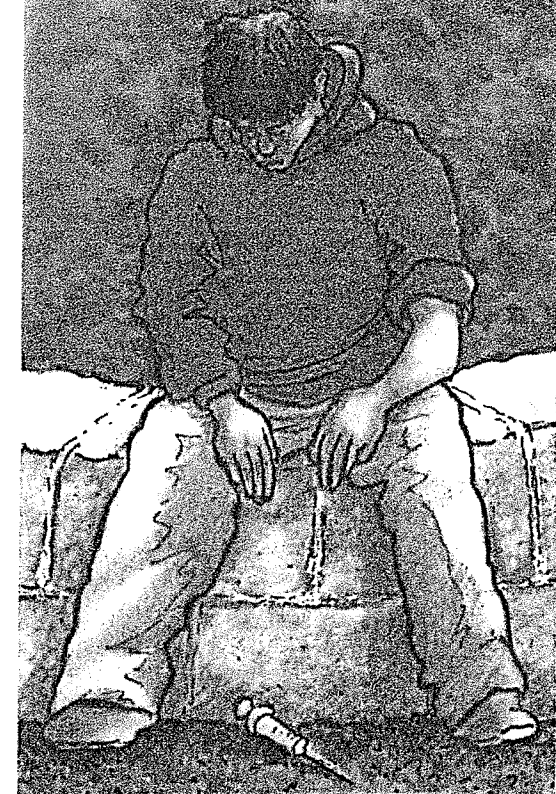
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GET THE FACTS

HOW HEROIN AFFECTS YOUR BODY



PROTECT YOUR BODY

HOW HEROIN AFFECTS YOUR BODY

Heroin – also known as smack, skag, junk or black tar – can be injected, sniffed or smoked. It is a very addictive and illegal drug. Using heroin affects every part of your body – and it can be deadly.



HEART

- ✓ Heroin can cause the heart to slow down or stop beating. This can lead to death.
- ✓ Injecting heroin can cause infections in the heart lining and valves.
- ✓ Chronic use can cause scarred or collapsed veins.

LUNGS AND NOSE

- ✓ Heroin can slow breathing. If too much is taken, users can stop breathing altogether, causing brain damage or death.
- ✓ Heroin use can contribute to pneumonia and tuberculosis.



- ✓ Smoking or inhaling heroin can cause damage to the lungs and nose.

BRAIN

- ✓ Heroin enters the brain fast. It slows down your thinking and affects your memory.
- ✓ Heroin can cause a loss of balance, coordination and concentration.
- ✓ It makes a person feel very sleepy.



INFECTIONS AND DISEASES

- ✓ Sharing needles for heroin increases the risk of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.
- ✓ Heroin is often cut with additives. Some of these additives can clog blood vessels and cause infections in the lungs, liver, kidneys and brain.



PREGNANCY

- ✓ Heroin use while pregnant can cause birth defects, miscarriage, being born too early and too small and starting life addicted to heroin.

SKIN

- ✓ Injecting heroin can cause painful abscesses (boils).



IMMUNE SYSTEM

- ✓ Chronic users may develop arthritis or a weakened immune system.

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

- ✓ Many people who use heroin find it very hard to stop using the drug.
- ✓ Withdrawal symptoms can be severe and include:
 - Extreme restlessness
 - Muscle and bone pain
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Diarrhea and vomiting
 - Chills
- ✓ Withdrawal symptoms can last from a few days to months.