

Heroin Fact Sheet

What is heroin?

Heroin is a highly addictive and fast acting opiate produced from morphine, which is a principal component of opium. Opium is a naturally occurring substance that is extracted from the seed pod of certain varieties of poppy plants.

Most street heroin is “cut” with other drugs or with substances such as sugar, starch, powdered milk, or quinine. Street heroin can also be cut with strychnine or other poisons.



Street terms for heroin:

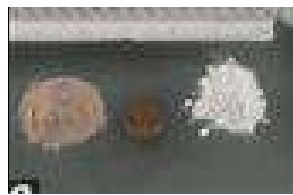
8-Ball (heroin mixed with crack cocaine), Big H, Black Tar, Body Bag, Boy, Brown Sugar, Caballo (Spanish), Capital H, China White, Chiva, Dead on Arrival, Diamorphine, Diesel, DOA, Dope, Dragon, Eighth, Good H, H, Harry, Hell Dust, Hombre, Horse, Instant Death, Junk, Mexican Horse, Mud, Negra, Nose Drops, Poppy, Silence of the Lamb, SKA, Skag, Skunk, Smack, Stuff, TNT, Thunder, Train, White Junk

How does heroin get to the United States?

Four foreign source areas produce the heroin available in the United States: South America (Columbia), Mexico, Southeast Asia (principally Burma), and Southwest Asia (principally Afghanistan). South America and Mexico supply most of the illicit heroin marketed in the United States.

What does heroin look like?

The appearance of heroin can vary dramatically. Pure heroin is a white (or off-white) powder. Some heroin is dark brown, and black tar heroin is either sticky or hard and looks like roofing tar. The color and consistency of black tar heroin are the result of the crude processing methods used to illicitly manufacture the heroin in Mexico.



What are the methods of usage?

Heroin is injected, snorted/sniffed or smoked.



Who uses heroin?

Individuals of all ages use heroin, though heroin use among high school students is a growing problem.

What are some of the consequences of heroin use?

Because heroin abusers do not know the actual strength of the drug or its true contents, they are at risk of overdose or death. Heroin users who inject the drug expose themselves to additional risks, including the transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other diseases that can occur from sharing needles.



Chronic users who inject heroin also risk scarred or collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and liver and kidney disease.

For more information on heroin and other illicit drugs, please visit any of the following web sites:

- Just Think Twice www.justthinktwice.com
- StreetDrugs.org www.streetdrugs.org
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) www.drugabuse.gov or www.nida.nih.gov
- The Partnership for a Drug Free America www.drugfree.com