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.

How does heroin affect your body?
- Heroin enters the brain very quickly.
- It is addictive both psychologically and physically.
- It can depress breathing. Overdoses can be fatal.

What is the effect of using heroin?
- Abusers report feeling a surge of euphoria followed by a state of sleep and wakefulness.
- Those who inject heroin risk infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, liver or kidney disease.
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 usually last about a week, but may last for months.

Did you know?

- The vast majority of teens are not using heroin. In a 2013 national survey, only 0.6% used heroin in the past year. (Source: University of Michigan, 2013 Monitoring the Future Study)

- A large majority of teens think people risk harming themselves using heroin. In a 2012 national survey, 8 out of 10 think using heroin is very risky. (Source: SAMHSA, 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH))

- Recent trends indicate that heroin use is increasing for persons 18 years of age and older. The number of people reporting past year heroin use was almost two times greater in 2012 (669,000) than in 2007 (373,000). (Source: SAMHSA, 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH))

- Reasons for the increase in heroin use and addiction may be due to the decrease in the use of prescription painkillers, as a result of changes in the OxyContin formulary, stricter laws, and costs. Heroin is cheaper and offers the same type of high. (Source: SAMHSA News Release, 8/22/13)

For drug prevention information, visit DEA's websites:

deagov
GetSmartAboutDrugs.com
JustThinkTwice.com

For parents, caregivers, and educators.

For teens.