

Children's Home of York Prevention Education

-Heroin Fact Sheet-

What is it?



Heroin is an opioid drug made from morphine, a natural substance taken from the seed pod of the various opium poppy plants grown in Southeast and Southwest Asia, and Central America. Heroin can vary greatly in appearance from a white or brown powder, to a black sticky substance which is typically known as black tar heroin. Heroin is highly addictive. People who regularly use heroin often develop a tolerance, which means that they need higher and/or more frequent doses of the drug to get the desired effects. It can be taken in a variety of ways: injection, inhalation (snorting) or smoking.

Once it enters the body, heroin enters the brain rapidly and affects many areas, especially those involved in feelings of pain and pleasure and more dangerously in areas which control heart rate, sleeping, and breathing. This is so dangerous because heroin slows down your heart-rate and breathing, which can lead to overdose or death.



Did you know?

-About one-third of substance users report heroin as the first opioid they used regularly to get high

-only about 0.5% of high school students and 1.8% of college-age adults report using heroin, but abuse of other opioids are on the rise in these age groups which may lead to heroin use in the future

-an estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids switch to heroin

-about 80 percent of people who use heroin report that they first misused prescription opioids

-Across all age groups approximately 15,000 deaths are attributed solely to heroin every year in the US, this number increases greatly when including cause of death with other drugs in combination with heroin

Solutions for Parents



To help prevent heroin and fentanyl use among the youth in your life, try some of these solutions:

- Stay informed about heroin and other drug trends, you can also educate yourself by using this sheet and by visiting the websites listed on our drug and alcohol resource guide.
- Talk to your child and teen about the dangers of heroin, and link this discussion into your talk about prescription opioids as these types of drugs often relate to each other.
- Safe storage of prescription opioids should also be a part of preventing future heroin use, because in the majority of cases heroin use starts with prescription opioid abuse
 - If you have opioids in your household whether for short or long term pain management remember to store them safely and carefully, like in a locked medicine cabinet or box
 - If you were prescribed an opioid and no longer need the medication remember to dispose of it properly at a medication disposal site. These sites are often located at police stations, health care facilities, and pharmacies.



Our Resources

Children's Home of York provides several free prevention programs to schools and youth in York County communities that help children and their families learn strategies to avoid using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. To request information or set up a free program in your school and community please call or email Cecilia Keesey, Director of Prevention at (717) 755-1033 ext. 1257 or ckeesey@choyork.org.

-Ask About Our New Free Virtual Prevention Programming Options-

Looking for More?



We hope this guide has helped you in your journey towards drug and alcohol education for yourself and your family. Remember research, education and support are key components to navigating the world of drug and alcohol prevention and treatment. If you want more information about heroin and fentanyl for you or your family check out our comprehensive drug and alcohol resource guide. This guide includes countless website links, hotline phone numbers, and even local in-person resources for York County.