



## WHAT IT IS

Heroin is a member of the opiate family of drugs that come from the opium poppy plant. Heroin is a highly addicted drug that is processed from morphine. It is a depressant that inhibits the central nervous system.

Heroin is a “downer” that effects the brain’s pleasure systems and interferes with the brain’s ability to perceive pain.

Names: Heroin, dust, “H,” horse, junk, smack, Harry, scag, brown sugar, black tar

Usage: Heroin is injected, snorted, or smoked. Many new, younger users begin by snorting or smoking heroin because they wish to avoid the social stigma attached to injection drug use. It is often mistakenly believed that snorting or smoking heroin will not lead to addiction. Users who snort or smoke heroin at times graduate to injection because as their bodies become conditioned to the drug, the effects it produces are less intense.

Legal Status: Heroin is illegal. Heroin is a schedule 1 substance under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule 1 drugs have a high potential for abuse and serve no legitimate medical purpose in the United States.

**Appearance:** The appearance of heroin can vary dramatically. In the eastern U.S., heroin generally is sold as a powder that is white (or off-white) in color. (Generally, the purer the heroin the whiter the color, because variations in color result from the presence of impurities.) In the western U.S., most of the heroin available is a solid substance that is black in color. This type of heroin, known as black tar, may be sticky or hard to the touch.

## EFFECTS OF HEROIN

Users who inject heroin will feel a euphoric surge or “rush” as it is often called. Their mouths may become dry. The drug has a depressant effect on the central nervous system, slowing breathing and suppressing pain. They may begin to nod in and out and their arms and legs will feel heavy and rubbery. They may experience a diminished mental capacity and dulled emotions. The effects of heroin lasts three to four hours after each dose