



Other Resources

Narcotics Anonymous 12 Step Program:
www.na.org

Heroin anonymous:
www.heroin-anonymous.org

Anonymous Substance Abuse Treatment
Facility Locator:
<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

National Helpline:
800-662-4357 (HELP)

Text your zipcode to 435748 (HELP4U)
to find help near you.

> **INFOCUS**
RECOVERY

HEROIN USE

If you are reading this brochure then you or someone you know probably believes that you are suffering from heroin use. Do not feel ashamed – heroin is an incredibly powerful drug that is very difficult to quit. Despite this, countless people worldwide live free of heroin's grip.

Detecting Heroin Dependency

"Am I addicted to heroin?" Here are some questions that might help to clarify the answer.

- Have I given up things that I enjoyed for heroin?
- Have I ever chosen heroin over a friend or loved one?
- Does heroin interfere with my work or finances?
- Do I find it difficult to turn down an offer of heroin?
- Do I need heroin to have a good or acceptable day?
- Do I get angry or depressed when I am denied heroin?
- Do I constantly seek, use or think about heroin?
- Do I suffer from severe cravings, cramps, muscle weakness or pain, insomnia, stomach problems or bone pain when I stop using?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, please seek help. There is no safe or acceptable level of heroin use. Remember that recognizing the problem is a crucial first step.

GET YOUR LIFE > INFOCUS

©2023 Prevention & treatment Resource Press, LLC
877-329-0578 • www.PTRPress.com • product #PB-DA207
This pamphlet may not be copied.





Use Vs. Addiction

There is no such thing as a safe dose of heroin. Heroin is an opioid; opioids are very habit forming and dangerous, but not everyone who uses heroin is addicted.

In the U.S. heroin is never prescribed but very similar drugs are. Misuse of drugs such as painkillers can lead to addiction. Snorting, eating or smoking prescription drugs is just as habit forming as using heroin.

Heroin addiction is a disease that creates chemical and molecular changes in the brain, altering its functioning and affecting the addict's mood, behavior and thoughts. Addiction is physical. The brain and body depend upon heroin for chemicals that it once manufactured for itself. The term heroin dependency reflects those changes and the withdrawal symptoms of heroin cessation. Addiction is not a reflection on the person. Anyone can become addicted to heroin.

Cessation and Recovery

Admitting to oneself, "I have a problem," is often the hardest part of recovery. It is also the crucial first step. One symptom of addiction is the belief that one is not addicted. As some twelve-step programs instruct:

"I have a disease that tells me that I do not have a disease."



Treatment

While there is no single definition of recovery a good working definition is maintaining sobriety, eliminating withdrawal symptoms and minimizing cravings. Treatments will focus on those goals. It is very important to note that very few heroin users quit on the first try – relapses are the rule, not the exception so do not lose heart!

Most heroin addiction treatment programs will use a variety of methods. Individual or group therapy, medication and support groups are some of the most effective and common techniques applied.

- Therapy is an exploration of the attitudes and mental attributes that contributed to the abuser's susceptibility to heroin. Having a therapist to talk to about the experience of quitting can go a long way to understanding the process, and can contribute greatly to success. Understanding fuels change.
- Medication seeks to minimize withdrawal symptoms and treat heroin's ongoing physical effects. Medication used for heroin cessation usually takes the form of opioid replacements such as Methadone®.
- Support groups help in a unique way; by connecting people facing similar challenges. A support group is how people get together to share stories and offer one another moral support, letting each other know they are not alone and people do care. Support groups can be instrumental to maintaining recovery.

Treatment Facilities

Few can bear the physical and mental anguish of withdrawal without assistance. Treatment facilities combine medical professionals and a nurturing environment to give the heroin user a greater chance at recovery. Finding a program where you feel comfortable is as important as what services are offered. Do not try to kick heroin alone; even the strongest-willed person can use more discipline and support. A well run program ups your chances of success dramatically.

The responsibility for recovery rests with the individual but the right help makes all the difference.

Inpatient facilities are a hospital or rehabilitation clinic. Some of them seem more like private homes or spas. The distinguishing feature of an inpatient treatment center is that a patient remains on the facility's grounds. The patient has no physical contact with the outside world. In this environment the patient can focus on honing their refusal skills. An inpatient or residential program is not like a prison, it is a place where one can create their new, sober lives.

Outpatient programs can take place virtually anywhere. They offer many of the same services as inpatient facilities with the notable exception of round-the-clock care. An outpatient program affords the person in recovery more freedom than inpatient care. This can make outpatient care more attractive to those who feel they can handle the pressure of work and family while quitting in an uncontrolled environment.

Heroin Withdrawal can be a nuisance for the light user, but it can be fatal for the chronic, heavy user. Seek medical help with your recovery.



Paying For Treatment

Treatment can be free, but it can also be costly. Payment assistance is available in many different forms. Check with your private insurance or local drug office. Call a counselor or social worker – you'll be surprised how much help is available and how eager they are to give it!

Recovery and Your Loved Ones

One of the most difficult parts of recovery is dealing with friends and family. Jealous friends may not want the recovery to succeed. Family may not think the person has what it takes. Everyone may be skeptical. These can be very difficult obstacles to overcome. The individual in recovery can be thwarted if they are not ready for this. They must remember that they are recovering for themselves, and doing so will help their loved ones regardless of what those people think.

You Can Do It

Anyone can quit using heroin. Even you. Call centers are open 24 hours a day. Your local Department of Health can recommend you to a facility. You can take control back, you can own your life, you can feel again.

Put down the powder and pick up a phone.