



Heroin



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Centre National
de Prévention des Addictions

“Brongen”, H (engl. “aitch”), “Boule”, ...



Heroin is produced in the laboratory from raw opium obtained from the opium poppy. Heroin belongs to the group of opioids and was still being marketed as a cough remedy and painkiller at the beginning of the 20th century before its highly addictive nature was discovered.



Main active ingredient

- Diacetylmorphine (*DAM*)



Legal status

- Illegal: Consumption, possession, acquisition, production and dealing are prohibited.



Consumption modalities

- Injected
- Inhaled
- Can also be “sniffed” (*snorted*) or smoked

Onset and duration of effect

- **Injected and inhaled/smoked:**
 - Onset: a few seconds
 - Duration: around 2-5 hours
- **“Sniffed” (*snorted*):**
 - Onset: a few minutes
 - Duration: around 2-5 hours

The duration of the effect very much depends on the degree of purity.



Effects

- Relaxing, calming
- Reduces anxiety
- Euphoria, elation (*high*, “*flash*”)
- State of well-being, feeling of serenity, self-satisfaction and security (“*you feel as if you are wrapped in cotton wool*”)
- Feeling of light-heartedness and indifference
- Sleepiness
- Analgesic



Risks and side effects

- Mental impairments such as confusion and memory lapses
- Disorientation and coordination disorders
- Indistinct and slurred speech
- Itchiness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Difficulties in passing urine and reduced intestinal activity
- Slowing of breathing and heart rate, fall in blood pressure
- Respiratory arrest in the event of an overdose, potentially leading to death
- In the event of shared use of injection equipment (*such as needles, spoons, and filters*) or of the tube used for snorting there is a danger of chronic infectious diseases such as HIV or hepatitis being transmitted.



Long-term risks

- Addiction
- Restlessness, agitation, fear, depressive states
- Sweating bouts and shivering
- Reduction in sexual desire
- Sleeplessness
- Infections
- In the case of inhalation/smoking: damage to the bronchial tubes and lungs

Worth knowing...

- ✓ Heroin is typically a blend of the pure substance and several extenders (*e.g. caffeine and paracetamol*). There may be major variances in purity and the amount of active ingredient. As consumers are ignorant of the exact composition of the heroin, there may be increased health risks and the danger of overdose.
- ✓ If heroin is consumed regularly over several weeks, a so-called drug tolerance sets in. It needs to be taken ever more frequently to achieve the desired state. Once drug tolerance has developed and the body is not receiving the required quantity of the substance, physical withdrawal symptoms set in within a few hours of the last heroin fix, including sweating bouts, vomiting, diarrhoea, cramps, sleeplessness. These are symptoms of addiction.
- ✓ “Speedball” is the name for a blend of heroin and cocaine. Particular caution is required when consuming heroin with alcohol and other drugs.
- ✓ Consuming heroin can lead to a deadly overdose. Consumers who consume the same dose as before after a period of protracted abstinence frequently run the risk of an unintentional, deadly overdose.

Do you become addicted after a single heroin “fix”?

No, as with every psychoactive substance it is rare to become addicted after only one use. Heroin addiction develops over several weeks of regular consumption. Together with tobacco and cocaine, heroin is one of the most addictive substances. The substance can cause psychological and physical addiction.

Are you given heroin for free in the “Fixerstuff”?

No, no illegal substances are provided in the so-called supervised injection site. This is a government health initiative to reduce consumption-related risks, such as overdoses and infections (“*harm reduction*”). Consumers are provided with sterile utensils (*needles, disposable filters, etc.*). This site therefore provides for the consumption of heroin in a clean and protected location under the supervision of trained personnel.

There is no such thing as a risk-free consumption of legal and illegal drugs!

When consuming any legal and illegal drug, the subjectively perceived effects depend on various factors (*how consumed, dose, age, gender, environment, mood as well as experience and expectation*).

Consumption of any drug can result in addiction.

The consumption of legal and illegal drugs is to be discouraged:

- In adolescence (*physical and mental development*)
- When driving and during other activities requiring a “clear head” (*e.g. sport, when operating machinery...*)
- In the workplace / in school
- During pregnancy and breastfeeding
- If there are previous medical conditions

Particular care is also required:

- If the quality of the product is unknown and cannot be checked
- In the event of combined use, e.g. alcohol and other drugs
- When medication is taken at the same time

If you notice that a person is not well after having consumed legal or illegal drugs, act responsibly and look after that person. If in doubt, phone the emergency number and administer first aid.



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Tem perguntas sobre a dependência, as drogas e as ofertas de ajuda?

Questions about addiction, drugs and assistance?

cnapa - Centre National de Prévention des Addictions - 2021. A presente brochura é financiada pelo fundo de luta contra certas formas de criminalidade.

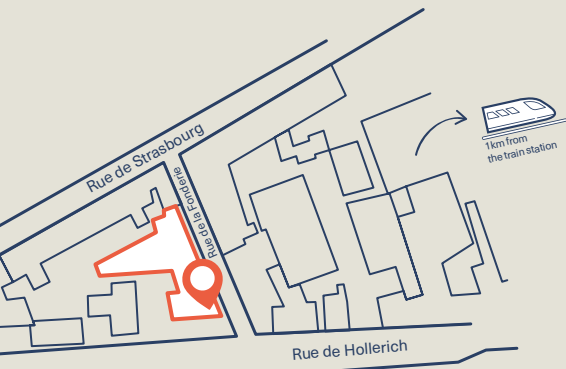
cnapa - Centre National de Prévention des Addictions (National Centre for Addiction Prevention) - 2021. This leaflet is financed by the fighting fund against certain forms of criminality.



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Ofertas:

Cursos de especialização e apoio a projetos no domínio da prevenção da toxicod dependência e da promoção da saúde

Informações sobre a prevenção da toxicod dependência e propostas de ajuda

Biblioteca (catálogo online): Empréstimo de livros e materiais didáticos

<http://bib.cnapa.lu/public/index.php>

Offerings:

Training courses and project counselling on addiction prevention and health promotion

Information on addiction prevention, dependencies and assistance

Library (online catalogue):

Lending of books and educational material

<http://bib.cnapa.lu/public/index.php>