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.
• Those who inject heroin risk infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, liver or kidney disease.

What are the health effects of heroin?*
• It is addictive both psychologically and physically. About 23% of persons who use it become dependent. It can slow down breathing. Overdoses can be fatal.
• Chronic users may develop collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, liver or kidney disease.

*Source: drugabuse.gov
**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 last about a week or months.

**Did you know?**

- Some people report taking heroin because it is cheaper and easier to obtain than prescription opioids.  

- The vast majority of teens do not use heroin.  
  In a 2015 national survey, only 0.5% of 12th graders used heroin in the past year.  
  Source: University of Michigan, 2014 Monitoring the Future Study.

- 79.8% of teens think using heroin weekly is very risky.  
  Source: SAMHSA, 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

- Recent trends indicate that heroin use is increasing for persons 18 years of age and older.  In 2012, 669,000 persons reported past year use which increased to 681,000 in 2013.  

- In 2013, 6,000 teens received treatment for heroin addiction; 128,000 young adults (18-25) received treatment for heroin.  

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**For drug prevention information, visit DEA’s websites:**

[GetSmartAboutDrugs.com](http://GetSmartAboutDrugs.com)  
For parents, caregivers, and educators

[JustThinkTwice.com](http://JustThinkTwice.com)  
For teens

[dea.gov](http://dea.gov)