



For further information:

Drugaid

Tel: 0870 060 0310

0870 numbers are more expensive from a mobile. 0870 numbers are cheaper from a landline.

Tel: 02920 868 675

Tel: 01685 721 991

www.drugaidcymru.com

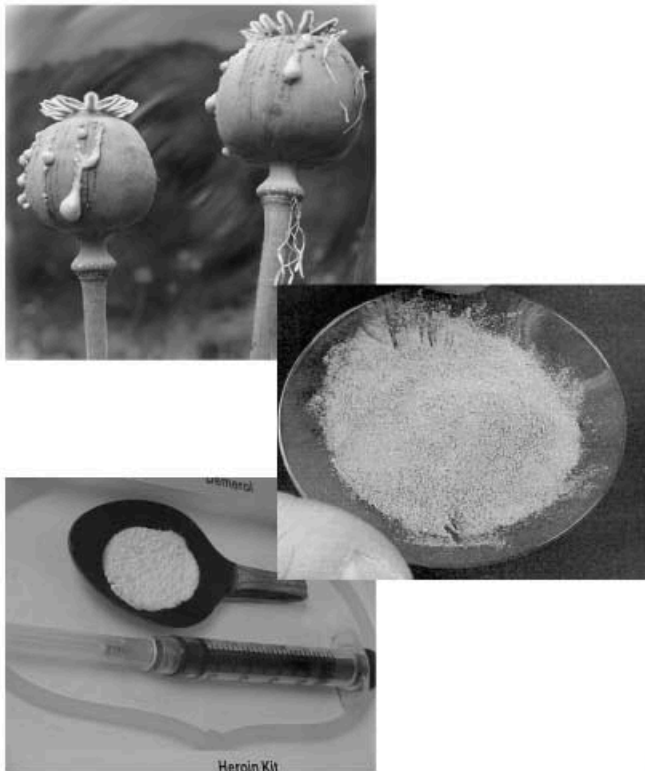


Heroin

Heroin

Brown, skag, H, horse, gear, smack

What does it look like?



Most of the heroin available in UK is brown in colour. This is in the base form and usually mixed with adulterants. It is more suitable to smoke than inject. Pharmaceutical grade heroin is white.

What is heroin?

Heroin is one of a group of drugs, known as opiates. It is derived from the opium poppy.

Heroin can be smoked, injected and sometimes snorted.

What will it do to me?

Heroin has powerful effects. For some people, the initial use of heroin can be uncomfortable, causing people to feel nauseas and a loss of balance.

People can feel a pleasant effect from heroin, a feeling of relaxation, inner warmth and an escape from emotions and any problems. It can produce a sense of euphoria, tranquility, drowsiness and emotional detachment.

Heroin also has strong painkilling properties.

Long-term heroin users experience constipation because heroin slows the action of the intestine.

Drugaid

When does it become a problem?

Regular use of heroin can lead to an increased tolerance. The tolerance develops quickly and larger quantities of heroin are needed to achieve the desired effects. You can end up using heroin just to be able to function instead of getting any of the pleasant effects.

If you use heroin every day for a number of days, your body can become dependent on it. When you have not used any heroin for a period of time you may begin to experience withdrawal symptoms. These can include a variety of extremely uncomfortable symptoms including pain, anxiety, muscle spasms, and insomnia.

It becomes a problem when you find your desire to use heroin takes over your life, to the detriment of relationships, finances, employment etc.

Staying safer

- Smoking heroin is safer than injecting.
- If you inject, always use clean needles and injecting equipment (spoons, swabs, water etc). You can access these from needle exchanges and pharmacies.
- If you inject, learn how to inject yourself using the safest and most effective technique. There are safer ways of injecting that will do less harm to your body. Injecting

with poor technique is one of the riskiest things you could ever do. Please contact Drugaid for more information.

- You can never be sure of the purity of heroin or what it is cut with.
- Avoid using in an unfamiliar or locked place, alone. More overdoses happen in these environments than anywhere else.
- If you have had a break in using, your tolerance will be significantly lower and you are at a greater risk of overdose.
- Mixing heroin with other drugs can increase the risk of overdose, especially drugs like alcohol, benzo's and methadone.
- If you suspect someone has overdosed, put them in the recovery position and call for emergency help immediately.
- Contact Drugaid for further support and to explore treatment options.

The Law

Heroin is a Class A drug.

Penalties

Possession: 7 years' imprisonment or a fine or both.

Supply: life imprisonment or a fine or both.

Production: life imprisonment or a fine or both.