

Heroin: The facts

What is heroin?

Heroin is an illegal opioid. Other opioids, such as the painkiller OxyContin, are legal with a prescription.

Why are opioids so dangerous?

- **They're very addictive.**
After even a short period of use, your body develops a tolerance to opioids, and you need more to get high. If you stop, you'll go through powerful withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, abdominal pain and shaking.
- **They have high rates of fatal overdose.**
It's easy to overdose on opioids, especially if you stop using them and then start again. This is because your body's tolerance decreases, so it can't handle the same amount.

What if I'm prescribed opioids?

Use your prescription only as directed, and take back any extra pills. Visit takebackyourmeds.org to see where they're accepted. Tell your doctor if you have a history of using opiates.

More resources

- **Washington Recovery Help Line:** 1-866-789-1511 or www.warecoveryhelpline.org
24-hour help for substance abuse, problem gambling and mental health.
- **Youth Eastside Services:** 425-747-4937 or www.youtheastsideservices.org
Outpatient assessments, integrated counseling and substance abuse treatment for young people up to age 22.
- **PMO Care:** 425-283-4200 or pmocare.com
Same- and next-day medication-assisted treatment for young adults 18+.



What to do if you know someone who uses opioids

- **DON'T** let them combine an opioid with alcohol or other drugs — they could die.
- **DON'T** let them use alone.
- **DO** get Naloxone, which reverses the effects of an opiate overdose. It's available without a prescription from some pharmacies. Visit stopoverdose.org to learn where.
- **DO call 9-1-1 immediately** if you're with someone who overdoses — don't take any chances. *Under Washington law, if you think someone is overdosing and seek medical help for them, neither of you will be charged for possessing or using a small amount of drugs.*
- **DO** encourage them to get help.