



EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

Know! Heroin is a Threat in Your Community

Heroin use has been on the rise since 2007 - Have you talked to your children about the dangers of this drug? If not, you may be thinking:

1. *Heroin is not going to cross my child's path where we live.*
2. *My child is terrified of needles, there is no way she'd try heroin.*
3. *Heroin may attract some kids, but not mine.*

If you share similar thoughts, you're not alone. But keep in mind, heroin has changed over the years, along with those who are using it. So let's get informed and up to date on this drug so that factual and accurate prevention messages can be shared with our children. We'll begin by debunking a few common myths.

Myth Buster #1 – At one time, heroin was predominantly found only in urban areas. That is no longer the case. It has made its way into suburban and rural communities throughout the nation.

Myth Buster #2 – While injection or “shooting up” remains the most common method of using heroin, it is not the only method (as it once was). Heroin can also be smoked or snorted – without needles.

Myth Buster #3 – Many of us hold certain stereotypes in our head of what a typical heroin user looks like. Erase that image and know that the student in your child's advanced biology class is now just as typical of a user.

Heroin is a highly addictive, lethal, illegal drug, derived from the painkiller morphine. Like many other street drugs, heroin is typically “cut” with other substances, which is one of the many reasons heroin is so dangerous. Users can never know for certain what other substances are in the mix or the potency of the drug, thereby increasing the risk of accidental overdose, which can lead to permanent brain damage, coma or death.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), repeated heroin use causes changes in the brain that are not easily reversed, including long-term behavioral imbalances. Chronic users are also known to suffer a variety of other health consequences including insomnia and constipation, depression and antisocial personality disorders, scarred and collapsed veins, skin abscesses and other soft tissue infections, clogged blood vessels and complications with the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and brain.

The path to a heroin addiction is quick and once there, users say that ***finding and using the drug at any cost becomes their primary purpose in life.***

Statistics show that four out of five new heroin users first abused prescription painkillers before moving to the cheaper, more accessible version – heroin. This is the biggest reason for the recent surge in use. However, there is the one in five who begin using heroin without ever having abused prescription drugs – so it is important for every parent to be aware.

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know!.

[Click here for the Know! Parent Tip Sign-Up Page.](#)

Know! is a program of:



**Lifetime
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Lifetime Wellness**

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Link to the article on the Drug Free Action Alliance Facebook Page

While the 18 to 25-year-old age group is the fastest growing population of heroin users, younger individuals are not immune. If your son or daughter is in middle or high school, now is the ideal time to talk with them about this highly dangerous and deadly drug, as part of your regular and ongoing prevention talks.

For more information visit <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>.

Sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): Drug Facts – Heroin. Foundation for a Drug-Free World: The Truth about Heroin.