Heroin

Quick Facts

• Heroin is a highly addictive and rapidly acting opiate.
• Specifically, heroin is produced from morphine, which is a principal component of opium.
• Opium is a naturally occurring substance that is extracted from the seedpod of the opium poppy.
• Known on the street as “smack,” “horse,” “H,” “junk,” or “scag,” heroin is the most commonly abused narcotic.

Facts

• Can be smoked, snorted, or injected.
• Heroin stops producing feelings of pleasure in users who develop a tolerance and they must continue to take the drug to feel normal.
• Symptoms of heroin withdrawal include heroin craving, restlessness, muscle and bone pain, and vomiting.

Risks

• Easy overdosing.
• Can cause slow and shallow breathing, convulsions, coma, and even death.
• Can cause infection of the heart lining and valves, liver disease, and pulmonary complications including various types of pneumonia.
• Street heroin has additives that don’t readily dissolve and result in clogging the blood vessels that lead to the lungs, liver, kidneys, or brain. This can cause infection or even death of small patches of cells in vital organs.
• Injecting heroin increases the chances of HIV and other bloodborne diseases.