

HEROIN (Diamorphine)

History	In the 19 th Century opiates were viewed as a "cure-all" purchased from grocers and corner shops
Street name	Smack, H, Kit, Skag, Brown
Type	Downer
Drug Effect	Painkillers and depressant (downer) Effects last for 2/3 hours. Users capable of functioning adequately; thinking, talking, acting coherently. At higher doses, sedation and drowsiness (gouching) occurs. Excessive doses: stupor, coma, possible respiratory failure.
Dependency	YES
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Powder: white/brown powder normally containing 5 –30% purity – often cut with adulterants. * Ampoules: clear solution * Tablet – 10mgs.
Street use	Smoked, sniffed, "chasing the dragon" (inhaling fumes of heated heroin), injected. Heroin products little effects if taken by mouth.
Withdrawal	Symptoms appear 8 – 24 hours after the last dose and resemble severe flu with diarrhoea. Peak around the 3 rd day and fade after 5 – 10 days. Sleeplessness may continue for several months.
Long term use	Constipation, breathing difficulties, Irregular periods if infected – infection risk/circulatory problems
Overdose	Deaths from the use of heroin alone are relatively infrequent, the risk of overdose increases after a period of abstinence (reduced tolerance). The risk of death increases greatly if heroin is mixed with alcohol / cocaine / benzodiazepines /barbiturates.
Legal Status	Prescription only medicine. Class A, Schedule 2.