



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

Know! To Talk About Heroin

Do parents of the average tween/teen really need to be talking to their child about such a hard-core, street drug? The unfortunate reality is, "yes," because heroin, black tar heroin specifically, has become much more mainstream, with some youth reportedly experimenting with this drug even before alcohol.

Why the surge in popularity? Black tar heroin is cheap, easy for kids to obtain and provides a powerful high.

Today's heroin is said to be 15 times more pure than heroin of the '70's. It is also viewed by today's youth quite differently than in the past. The typical heroin user these days could easily be the girl next door (the one your child has grown up with), the popular boy at school (the one your child possibly looks up to), or the academically-driven student (the one you may least expect to ever try such a thing). Our children look around and see regular peers in their everyday world using this incredibly dangerous, highly addictive drug. In reality, these are the new faces of heroin.

What is black tar heroin and how is it used?

- Black tar heroin is an opiate drug processed from morphine. It is a black, sticky substance that users snort, smoke, ingest orally or inject.

Black Tar Heroin Negatively Affects the Body and Mind:

- Temporarily blocks the brain's naturally occurring pain signals, causes clouded thinking and an alternately wakeful/drowsy state (signaled by repeated head-nodding, where eyes drift closed and head falls forward).
- Depresses heart rate, circulation and breathing, with the potential to cause pneumonia, tuberculosis or respiratory failure.
- Extremely addictive with tolerance developing quickly, so that increased doses are "needed" to reach the same high and according to users, to even feel "normal."
- Once addicted, withdrawal symptoms can occur just hours after last use, producing extreme cravings for the drug, as well as restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, chills, kicking movements and other symptoms.
- Users who progress to injecting heroin are at increased risk for infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, as well as scarred/collapsed veins and abscesses (boils) of the skin, kidney disease and bacterial infections of the blood vessels and heart valves.
- Heroin use at anytime can cause immediate death.

Talking regularly with kids reduces their risk of using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know! by taking the Parent and Caregiver Pledge.

Know! is a program of:



Drug-Free Action Alliance
*Lifetime Prevention
Lifetime Wellness*

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With funding support from:



United Way
of Central Ohio

Signs of Use:

- Slurred speech, slow movements, runny nose/eyes, constricted pupils, increased fatigue/unusual amount of sleeping.
- Change in friends, decline in grades, neglected hygiene and appearance.
- Unexplained small foil balls or plastic bags/balloons, capsules, Visine Eye Drops squirt bottle (used for snorting), missing items such as spoons, aluminum foil, checks or cash or patterns of borrowing money with nothing to show for it.
- If your child is injecting, his/her drug use has likely progressed. Track marks are a giveaway, but users who inject are typically doing so in hidden places on their bodies.

PARENTS: *Black Tar Heroin* is destroying the lives of young people and their families in high schools and even junior highs across the country. It is critical to talk to your tween/teen about the dangers of heroin use and other drugs. Reinforce your stance against substance abuse. Always know where your child is, who he/she is with and what they are doing. And work hard to keep the lines of communication open between you and your child.

SOURCES: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Serenity House Counseling Services, Teen Drug Abuse: Teen Heroin Addiction: Implications for Prevention and Treatment, StopHeroin.net The Partnership at Drugfree.org.