



HOOKED FOR LIFE

Jackie's Story

Jackie was one of those girls who seemed to have it together: She was a straight-A student, she had lots of friends and she got along with her family.

Then one night after her seventeenth birthday, Jackie snorted heroin at a party. She just wanted to see what it was like. She never planned to do it again.

Soon, though, Jackie was hooked. In a few months, she stopped snorting heroin and started injecting it.

Jackie's grades started to drop and she lost her job at the bookstore because she came in late all the time. All she cared about was heroin.

By the time she was a senior in high school, Jackie was an addict. Her parents checked her into a drug rehab center after they found her passed out in the bathroom one night. Once Jackie got out of rehab, she started using again. Her parents wanted to send her to rehab again, but Jackie refused to go.

Jackie died of a heroin overdose a few weeks before her high school graduation. Her parents found her unconscious in her bedroom, a needle still stuck in her arm. They called 9-1-1, but it was too late: Jackie was gone.

Jackie's friends wonder how things would have been different if she'd never tried heroin that night. But they'll never know.

WALKING AWAY

Saying "No" to Heroin

If someone offers you heroin, tell them "no" – or try one of these lines:

- "No way. Needles freak me out."
- "I don't want to risk getting AIDS."
- "Sorry. I don't need another bad habit."

WORK IT OUT!

Do you know the facts about heroin? Take this quiz and find out!

1. Heroin mixed with over-the-counter cold medicine is sometimes called:
A. "Dragon" B. "Cheese"
C. "Cheddar" D. "OTC"
2. Snorting or smoking heroin is sometimes called "Chasing the _____"
A. Jackie B. Cheese
C. Horse D. Dragon
3. The short-term effects of heroin include:
A. Collapsed veins B. Risk of overdose
C. Nausea and vomiting D. All of the above
4. Which is NOT a street name for heroin?
A. "Junk" B. "Skag"
C. "Poppy" D. "Horse"
5. Snorting heroin is a safe alternative to injecting it.
A. True B. False

HEROIN



Answers: 1. b; 2. d; 3. d; 4. c; 5. b

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985-359-7848 • www.primoprevention.com • PSS-DA-10

A KILLER HIGH



LIVING FOR THE RUSH! A Day in the Life of a Heroin Junkie

It's been a few hours since your last fix. Your body is racked with the pain of withdrawal symptoms, and your hands are shaking so badly that you're having trouble holding the needle still. Your arms are covered in scars and sores from where you've been shooting up. The scars make the needle hurt, but in a few minutes, you won't notice the pain. You won't notice anything. The minute you put the needle in your arm, you feel a rush. The heroin races through your bloodstream and heads to your brain. You feel a sense of euphoria wash over you.

In a few hours, the high will wear off and you'll be back where you started: sick, shaky and looking for a fix. If you don't die, of course.

You're not thinking about that now, though. All you care about is making the pain stop.

STREET NAMES FOR HEROIN

You might have heard some of the other names for heroin – like smack, skag, horse, or junk. No matter what you call it, though, heroin is deadly.

Heroin comes from the opium poppy plant. Opium poppies might look like harmless flowers, but when those flowers are ground up and mixed with other chemicals, they become a deadly drug.

Heroin starts out as white powder, but by the time it gets to dealers it's dark brown. That's because it's been mixed with deadly, toxic chemicals. Nobody knows exactly what's in heroin – and that's what makes it so deadly. It's impossible to know exactly what you're getting.

RISKY BUSINESS

The Short-Term Effects of Heroin on Your Body

Heroin users say the drug makes them feel good – but there's nothing good about what heroin does to your brain and body.

In the short term, heroin does all sorts of damage, including:

- Vomiting and nausea
- Collapsed veins
- Track marks, sores and itching at the injection sites
- Risk of being exposed to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis
- Risk of overdose
- Death

One of the worst short-term effects of heroin, though, is the painful withdrawal symptoms that users experience immediately after the high wears off. Users experience drowsiness, confusion and a drastically slowed heartbeat and breathing. Some users often die after using heroin.

Also, many heroin users share needles – and that means that they expose themselves to deadly diseases like AIDS or Hepatitis.

ADDICTION, WITHDRAWAL AND DEATH

Heroin's Long-Term Effects

It doesn't take long to get hooked on heroin. Heroin addicts need to keep using heroin in order to avoid withdrawal symptoms, including:

- Insomnia
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Chills

Junkies may think that heroin makes them feel better, but they're really doing long-term damage to their bodies, including:

- Risk of liver and kidney disease
- Infection of the heart lining
- Heart problems

Of course, heroin users also risk death every time they shoot up. Because heroin is mixed with chemicals, it's impossible to know how pure it is. That makes it easy to inject too much of the drug – leading to overdose and even death.

THE PARTY'S OVER

So is Your Future

Heroin is also illegal. If you're caught with heroin, you could be looking at serious consequences, like jail time and a criminal record. A felony on your record can prevent you from getting into college, finding a good job, or even a place to live.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

The Dangers of "Chasing the Dragon"

Some people think that heroin is safer if they snort or smoke it instead of injecting it – but those people are wrong.

Smoking or snorting heroin (sometimes people call it "chasing the dragon") is just as deadly as injecting it. In fact, users who smoke or snort heroin face the same life-threatening health problems and withdrawal symptoms as users who shoot up. People who smoke or snort heroin are also at risk for addiction, overdose and death.

Bottom line? Heroin is dangerous. It doesn't matter how you use it.

HOLD THE CHEESE, PLEASE and We're Not Talking About Cheddar

"Cheese" is the name for heroin mixed with over-the-counter cold medicine – and it's another deadly drug that you should know about.

Cheese is cheaper than heroin – it only costs a couple of dollars per hit – and users snort it instead of injecting it. Cheese isn't a "safe" alternative to heroin, though: The price of using cheese is just as high in the long run. Just like heroin, cheese is highly addictive. Users experience the same withdrawal symptoms as heroin junkies.

Cheese is also deadly: Heroin and cold medicine are both depressants, which means your body is getting a double dose of downers. The dangerous mixture slows your body down. Your heartbeat slows. So does your breathing. Sometimes, things slow down so much that you die.



FADE TO BLACK

What is Black Tar Heroin?

Black tar heroin – sometimes called "brown," "black," "chiva," "tar," "slab," or "la negra" – is a cheap, crudely-produced form of heroin that is common in the United States. Unlike regular heroin, which is sold as a white or light-brown powder, black tar heroin is dark brown or black and sticky.

Because of black tar heroin's thick, sticky texture, users who inject it are at a higher risk for developing hard, narrow veins – a condition known as sclerosis. Users are also at risk for contracting AIDS/HIV and bacterial infections.

It doesn't matter what color heroin is. Black or white, sticky or powdery – it's all deadly.