



Centre de Prévention  
des Toxicomanies

# heroin

The background of the page is a photograph of various items associated with heroin use, including a pile of white powder, a crumpled piece of paper, two white pills, and two pieces of crumpled paper, all set against a light brown surface. The word 'heroin' is overlaid in large, white, lowercase letters with a black outline.

# Heroin

[ H, powder, big H, smack, skag, junk ]



## *Active substance*

- morphine or diacetylmorphine (made from opium, a substance extracted from the poppy)

## *Legal status*

- illegal

## *Administration routes*

- typically injected intravenously
- may also be smoked, inhaled (blow) or sniffed

## *Time of onset and duration*

**injected:** after a few seconds

**smoked, sniffed:** after a few minutes.

Depending on the dose and the quality of the substance, the effects last for between 2 and 5 hours

## *Effects*

- rush of euphoria, feeling of wellbeing
- soothes pain
- calm and sense of tranquillity
- inertia, feeling of indifference, of recklessness
- decrease in respiration, fall in blood pressure, decreased heart rate

## *Risks of addiction*

- regular consumption results in a strong psychological and physical dependence

## *Associated risks*

- respiratory paralysis to the point of cardiac arrest

## *injected:*

- inflammation of the veins, risk of contracting infectious diseases (i.e. AIDS, hepatitis C, fungal growth) if hypodermic equipment is shared
- high risk of overdose among occasional users or drug addicts after a period of deprivation (e.g. course of therapy or prison stay)

## *sniffed:*

- damage to the nasal mucous membranes
- infectious diseases if inhalation equipment is shared (straw or other)

## *smoked:*

- damage to the bronchial passages and lungs

## Heroin causes dependency from the time it is first consumed

Heroin dependency sets in after a few weeks of regular consumption. The potential risk of heroin dependency is high. The first few instances of consumption characterised by bouts of euphoria (cf. honeymoon) gradually give way to consumption for the purpose of avoiding withdrawal symptoms (i.e. shakes, running nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhoea).

## Heroin is mixed with rat poison

Heroin is not cut with rat poison. Nevertheless, other substances can be mixed with heroin. The substances most frequently encountered are caffeine and paracetamol. In Luxembourg, heroin sold on the street has a level of purity of about 10%.

## In the Fixerstuff heroin is distributed free of charge

No substance is distributed in the consumption room. This is a public health initiative by the government to reduce the risks associated with consumption such as overdoses or infections. Sterile utensils are provided. As a result, this environment enables heroin to be consumed legally in a clean, calm and secure location.





## **The consumption of psychoactive substances entails risks**

**The consumption of any psychoactive substance can cause dependency. Particular caution is called for:**

- if the quality of the product cannot be checked
- when consuming different psychoactive substances at the same time
- in adolescence (physical and mental development)
- in traffic or when operating machinery

**You should abstain entirely from psychoactive substances during pregnancy and while breastfeeding**

# FRONO



**497777-55**  
**frono@cept.lu**

**prevention – drugs – addiction**

**do you have any questions?  
looking for information on  
counselling and help services?**

**49 77 77-55**

(monday – friday: 9 – 13 h)

**frono@cept.lu**

**www.cept.lu**

This leaflet was published by the CePT – Centre de  
Prévention des Toxicomanies and funded by the  
FONDS DE LUTTE CONTRE CERTAINES FORMES DE  
CRIMINALITE