

# A COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE TO COMBAT HEROIN

WHAT IS  
HEROIN?

HEROIN  
AND RX  
DRUGS



FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS

WHO USES  
HEROIN?

WHERE TO GO  
FOR HELP

**INCLUDES INFORMATION ON THE WARNING SIGNS OF HEROIN USE,  
WHO TO CONTACT FOR HELP, LAW ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS AND  
COMMUNITY RESOURCES.**

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## **Connecting Prescription Drugs and Heroin:**

Abuse of prescription opiate painkillers (i.e., Oxycontin and Vicodin) is behind heroin's growth in popularity with young people: these pills are the doorway to heroin abuse.

Youth become addicted to pain killers initially by helping themselves to their parent's prescriptions (or those of friends' parents). They then need to buy on the 'street', but the pills cost between \$20 - \$50 each. Heroin is much cheaper and easier to get.

Between 2004 and 2008, at least 1,068 people on Long Island died in overdoses of either heroin or prescription opiates

## **The Facts About Heroin:**

A tiny, one-dose bag of heroin costs \$5-\$10 and is cheaper than highly controlled synthetic opiates like Oxycontin or Hydrocodone and is easily accessible to teenagers.

A bag of heroin can be cheaper than a six-pack of beer.

Teenagers are snorting it, smoking it, getting hooked faster (today's heroin is upwards of 70% pure as compared to 10% pure a generation ago) and overdosing more.

You can overdose on heroin the very first time you use it.

Children as young as 12 are using heroin.

Heroin arrests have risen 91% in Nassau County between 2005 and 2008.

## **What Is Heroin?**

Heroin is a morphine derivative, and morphine is opium's most potent active ingredient. First synthesized in 1874, heroin was widely used in medicine in the early part of the 20th Century, until its addictive potential was recognized.

Pure heroin is a white powder with a bitter taste. Street heroin may vary in color from white to dark brown because of impurities or additives. There is a dark brown or black form of the drug, as dense as roofing tar or coal, known as "black tar."



### **How is Heroin Used?**

Heroin is injected, snorted or smoked. Many new, younger users begin by snorting or smoking heroin because they wish to avoid the social stigma attached to injection drug use. These users often mistakenly believe that snorting or smoking will not lead to addiction.

Users who snort or smoke heroin usually graduate to injection because as their bodies become conditioned to the drug, the effects are less intense, where the effects of injected heroin are more intense.

### **Who Uses Heroin?**

There is no 'cookie-cutter' heroin user. Individuals of all ages and lifestyles have used heroin. According to the DEA, approximately 1.2% of the population reported using heroin at least once in their lifetime.

### **What Is The Attraction of Heroin?**

Users who inject heroin will feel a euphoric surge or a 'rush' as it is often called. Their mouths may become dry. They may begin to nod in and out and

their arms and legs will feel heavy and rubbery. They may experience a diminished mental capacity and dulled emotions. The effect of heroin lasts three to four hours after each dose has been administered.

### **What Are the Long-Term Consequences of Heroin Use?**

Users say they are never able to recreate the euphoria of their first high. Heroin users develop a tolerance for the drug and progressively use more in an effort to get the original feeling. Heroin is highly addictive.

### **What to Look For:**

It is important to keep in mind that if a child shows any of the following symptoms, it does **not necessarily mean** that he or she is using drugs. A substance abuse or mental health professional may help a youngster successfully overcome a crisis and develop more effective coping skills

**The key is change;** it is important to watch for any significant changes in your child's physical appearance, personality, attitude or behavior.

#### **Physical Signs**

- Loss of appetite, increase in appetite, unexplained weight loss or gain.
- Slowed or staggering walk; poor physical coordination.
- Inability to sleep, awake at unusual times, unusual laziness.
- Red, watery eyes; pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare.
- Cold, sweaty palms; shaking hands.
- Puffy face, blushing or paleness.
- Smell of substance on breath, body or clothes.
- Extreme hyperactivity; excessive talkativeness.
- Runny nose; hacking cough.
- Needle marks on lower arm, leg or bottom of feet.
- Nausea, vomiting or excessive sweating.
- Tremors or shakes of hands, feet or head.
- Irregular heartbeat.

#### **Behavioral Signs**

- Change in overall attitude/personality with no other identifiable cause.
- Changes in friends; new hang-outs; sudden avoidance of old crowd.
- Change in activities or hobbies.
- Drop in grades at school or performance at work; skips school or is late for school.

- Change in habits at home; loss of interest in family and family activities.
- Difficulty in paying attention; forgetfulness.
- General lack of motivation, energy, self-esteem, "I don't care" attitude.
- Sudden oversensitivity, temper tantrums, or resentful behavior.
- Moodiness, irritability, or nervousness.
- Silliness or giddiness.
- Paranoia
- Secretive or suspicious behavior.
- Car accidents.
- Chronic dishonesty.
- Unexplained need for money, stealing money or items.
- Change in personal grooming habits.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.

### **Tools for Parents:**

**Although such topics as the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs are emotionally charged, they are a natural and necessary part of communicating process you have with your child.** Clearly, the best time for such a conversation about drugs is when your child brings up the topic. For most parents, however, it's not this easy and it may become your responsibility to raise the subject. You'll want to pick a time and a place that make it possible for you and your child to be comfortable and undisturbed.

**Remember that the purpose of this encounter is communication,** so listen to everything your child has to say. Observe his or her nonverbal cues – they will let you know how he or she feels about having this conversation. Listening means paying special attention to what is said, both verbally and non-verbally.

Communicating with your child about drug use should not be a one-time occurrence or a one-way process. **Conversations about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs are not like inoculations that can protect children for all time.** Talk with your children often as they grown from preschool to adulthood.

### **Common Concerns Parents Have**

**"I don't want to be a hypocrite..."**

What if you smoke, enjoy the occasional cocktail or experimented with drugs once yourself? This is a legitimate concern, but it should not dissuade you from communicating honestly with your child and sharing what experience has taught you. You don't have to project a perfect image to be an effective communicator! We are all human, and this is in itself an important message.

### **"I don't want to plant ideas in my child's head..."**

Are you concerned that you might inadvertently prompt your child to consider drug use when it wasn't even in his or her mind to begin with? Don't worry; discussions don't suddenly make children users. In fact, you can safely assume that your child is already aware of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Discussing these topics clarifies information and lets children know your views – it doesn't invite them to use these substances.

### **"I am uncomfortable with this role..."**

There is nothing wrong with sharing your discomfort with your child. No doubt he or she already senses it. An admission from you reassures your child that your anxiety stems from within you, not from something he or she has said or done.

## **HELPFUL EXAMPLES OF PARENT-CHILD DIALOGUES**

<b>Your child says....</b>	<b>Your first response may be to blurt out...</b>	<b>A better response would be...</b>
<b>Timmy has started smoking but his parents don't know</b>	I'm going to call Timmy's mother. She has to be told and that's all there is to it.	How do you feel about Timmy starting to smoke and his parents not knowing?
<b>Pot can't be all that bad for you because I've seen kids who use it and they're fine.</b>	It'll be bad for them if they get caught and end up in trouble with the law.	I'd like to share with you some of the information I read about the effects of smoking marijuana over time.
<b>You lived through the 70's. Why don't you let me live through my decade without your interference.</b>	I don't want you to make the same mistakes I did.	Sharing my experiences and listening to yours are among the most important things I can do for you as a parent.
<b>Nobody else has parents this strict. You're still living in the Dark Ages.</b>	One day you'll be down on your knees thanking me.	How would you like me to be? What do you think would be most helpful to you?
<b>How can you tell me not to smoke when you inhale two packs a day? Isn't that awfully hypocritical?</b>	Don't you dare talk to your father like that.	I know I'm not providing you with a good example. I'd very much like to quit.

**REMEMBER: take inventory of all Rx drugs and keep them in a secure place and constantly update!**



## Law Enforcement Resources:

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Commissioner Thomas R. Sofield points out that involved citizens are the most valuable resource any community can have in preventing crime, including the sale and use of illicit drugs. Recognizing this fact, the Long Beach Police Department has implemented a number of initiatives to safely involving our citizens in preventing and reporting suspicious or unlawful activity. These programs include:

#### Confidential TIPS line

Members of the community are encouraged to report information about crimes, including specific information about drug activity, to our Crime Stoppers Hotline at **516-705-7370**. All calls are kept confidential and cash rewards may be available for information leading to an arrest.

#### E-Z Internet

Submit the tip utilizing our internet crime information reporting services. The Long Beach Police Department has established the following accounts:

[www.twitter.com/LongBeachPD](http://www.twitter.com/LongBeachPD)

[www.facebook.com/LongBeachPD](http://www.facebook.com/LongBeachPD)

Log-on to Twitter and Facebook for the latest LBPD information.

Note: You must have or create a Facebook account to fully utilize the Facebook service.

**Text a tip** regarding someone who is selling heroin, cocaine, marijuana, illegal pills, or other drugs, and you may receive a reward. To utilize this convenient service, Twitter Account: longbeachpd ([www.twitter.com/longbeachpd](http://www.twitter.com/longbeachpd) is a direct site, but not necessary to follow the feed). This service can be used to report information regarding other criminal activity as well.

**431-1800** enables anyone to report incidents that, although not emergencies, may still require a police officer to respond. For example, callers can report drug dealing, loud parties, suspicious activity or disturbances by dialing (516) 431-1800 without tying up 911. All residents are strongly encouraged to use this number to report non-emergency suspicious activity in Long Beach.

#### Neighborhood Watch

Long Beach has recently revitalized the highly-effective Neighborhood Watch Program. Consider joining Neighborhood Watch, or perhaps consider becoming a Neighborhood Watch coordinator if no program exists in your neighborhood. For more information, call Sgt Richard DePalma at 516-705-7323, e-mail him at [rdepalma@lbpd.com](mailto:rdepalma@lbpd.com) or visit the Long Beach Police Department's website at [www.lbpd.com](http://www.lbpd.com).

**Long Beach Treatment Resources:**

**Long Beach Medical Center**

In-Patient Detoxification Unit  
455 East Bay Drive  
Long Beach, New York 11561  
516-897-1272

**Long Beach Medical Center**

Family Alcoholism & Chemical Dependence Treatment Services (FACTS)  
455 East Bay Drive  
Long Beach, New York 11561  
516-897-1250

**Long Beach Medical Center**

Methadone Maintenance Treatment  
455 East Bay Drive  
Long Beach, New York 11561  
516-897-1330

**Long Beach Reach, Inc.**

12 West Park Avenue  
Long Beach, New York 11561  
516-889-2332

**Nassau County Drug & Alcohol Hotline**

516-481-4000

**New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse  
Services (OASAS) HOPEline**

1-877-8-HOPENY

**Helpful Websites:**

**Nassau Alliance for Addiction Services (NAFAS)**  
[www.NassauAlliance.org](http://www.NassauAlliance.org)

**Office of National Drug Control Policy**  
[www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)

**National Institute on Drug Abuse**  
[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA)**  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

**Partnership for a Drug-Free America**  
[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

**Monitoring the Future**  
[www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org)

**Department of Justice, DEA Homepage, Drug Information**  
[www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

## **About Long Beach Medical Center**

Long Beach Medical Center serves as the major health care facility for residents of Long Beach Island and the surrounding communities. Its campus includes a 162-bed acute care hospital, a 200-bed skilled nursing facility specializing in rehabilitative medicine, a certified Home Health Care Agency and a wide range of outpatient programs. It is a teaching facility for the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, with residency programs in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Family Medicine.

It hosts several centers of excellence, including our comprehensive **Behavioral Health and Addiction Treatment Services**. Services include: a discreet inpatient detoxification unit for alcohol and/or chemical dependency, outpatient therapy and support through FACTS (**F**amily **A**lcohol and **C**hemical-substance **T**reatment **S**ervices), a licensed Methadone Maintenance Program, a 24-bed short-term, inpatient psychiatric unit, and comprehensive mental wellness services for all ages via our Counseling Center. We are the sponsoring organization for the Long Beach Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking and are now licensed to provide treatment and support to individuals struggling with gambling addictions and their families, as well. For more information, contact:

<b>COUNSELING CENTER (Outpatient Mental Health Services)</b>	<b>897-1270</b>
<b>FACTS (Outpatient Alcohol &amp; Chemical Substance Treatment)</b>	<b>897-1250</b>
<b>INPATIENT DETOX UNIT</b>	<b>897-1671</b>
<b>INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE</b>	<b>897-1620</b>
<b>METHADONE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM</b>	<b>897-1330</b>
<b>GAMBLING ADDICTION TREATMENT SERVICES</b>	<b>897-1250</b>
<b>COALITION TO PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING</b>	<b>897-1250</b>

For general information on Long Beach Medical Center's services, please call **(516) 897-1000** or visit our website at [www.lbmc.org](http://www.lbmc.org)