

Teens and Heroin Heroin in Nassau County



Heroin is a highly addictive drug that is affecting the lives of many young adults all over Long Island. Teens who become addicted to heroin often start by using what they see as less dangerous drugs, including prescription drugs often found in their parents' medicine cabinets. Heroin doesn't cost a lot, it's deadly, and is a major concern for community members, treatment providers, families, the Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) and other Nassau County officials.

Heroin and the problems that it causes get progressively worse with time. The NCPD made 386 heroin-related arrests in 2009 - a 45 percent increase over 2008. There were 38 total heroin-related deaths in Nassau County in 2009, an average of approximately 3 deaths per month.



Don't let this drug take over your life or the life of a loved one. This web site has been designed to inform teens about heroin, prevent the use of heroin and provide treatment options for those who are already hooked on heroin.

did you know?

Long Island residents were brutally awakened to the teen heroin problem in June 2008, when Natalie Ciappa, an 18-year-old honors student fatally overdosed.

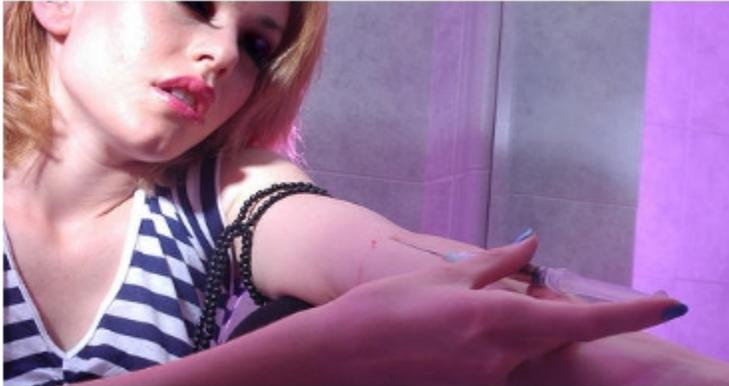
To report drug problems in your community call Nassau County District Attorney's Office Anonymous Tip Line at 516-739-6666.

Teens and Heroin

Heroin Facts

From 1991 to 1995, heroin use among the nation's young people roughly doubled, while the percentage of teens that considered heroin use dangerous declined. There were a variety of reasons for these shifts, none more critical than the increased purity of the drug.

Today, heroin use among teenagers is still popular, and it is easier than ever for teens to find a heroin dealer in suburban areas.



How is Heroin abused?

Heroin can be snorted / sniffed through the nose, smoked, or injected into the bloodstream using a needle (usually through the arm). These routes of administration rapidly deliver the drug to the brain. All three methods of administering heroin can lead to addiction and other severe health problems. They are all equally dangerous and can cause death.

did you know?

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 29.7 percent of 12th graders say that it is easy to obtain--12.6% of 8th graders say that they can obtain heroin.

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Teens and Heroin

Potential Signs of Heroin Use

Physical Symptoms

- Nausea, vomiting
- Itching and scratching
- Constricted, pinpoint pupils
- Constipation, cessation of menstruation
- Weight loss
- Needle marks on arms and/or legs
- Dry mouth, runny nose, constant sniffing
- Droopy appearance, as if extremities are “heavy”
- Nodding out mid-conversation
- Slowed speech

Emotional Signs

- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Diminished self-esteem
- Depression
- Change in interests

Evidence of Heroin Use

- Burnt gum wrappers, foil
- Burnt or missing spoons
- Missing shoelaces (used to tie off arms to inject heroin)
- Pipes, rolling papers, etc
- Bottles of eye drops used to make bloodshot, glassy eyes
- Wax paper or Glycerin bags
- Straws, Cotton balls
- Mirrors with scratches on them
- Razor blades

Social Signs

- Negative attitude
- Secretiveness, withdrawal
- Lying, dishonesty
- Unexplained disappearance of money or household valuables
- Decreased interests in schoolwork and activities
- Poor performance in school
- Irregular school attendance, lateness
- Distancing oneself from old friends
- Begins to associate with people who are also using
- Changes to style in clothing, music or activities
- Pulling away from family
- A messy room - it's easier to hide things
- Personal appearance begins to matter less

did you know?

The heroin available today is purer and arguably more lethal than the heroin that was popular in the '70s. Dealers often mark heroin bags with words like “Red Bull”, “Lexus”, “Kiss of Death” and “R.I.P” or a skull and crossbones.



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Teens and Heroin Health Effects

Brain Effects

- Enters the brain, turns into morphine and binds to the opioid receptors
- Opioid receptors are responsible for necessary actions such as breathing, blood pressure and arousal
- Heroin overdoses usually interfere with respiration
- After injection, snorting or smoking the heroin, the user gets a rush, followed by dry mouth, warm flushing of the skin, heaviness of the body and mental fuzziness
- After the “high”, they will get drowsy
- Regular heroin users build a tolerance (like heavy drinkers do)
- Users’ response to the drug decreases so more heroin is needed to get the same rush effect

Users Risk

- Miscarriages
- HIV / AIDS
- Hepatitis
- Collapsing veins
- Infecting the heart lining
- Abscesses (a collection of pus in the body tissues)
- Liver or kidney disease
- Lung complications such as pneumonia
- Toxic poisons that can clog blood vessels that lead to the lungs, liver, kidneys or brain

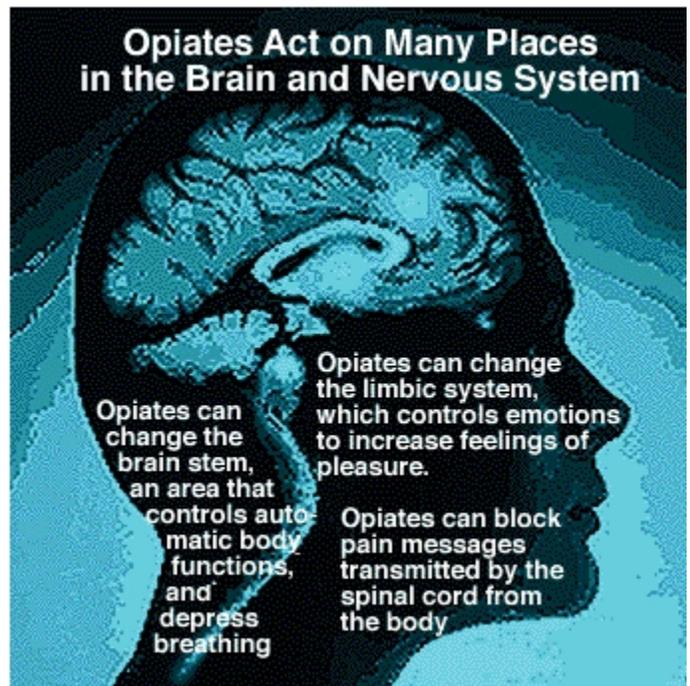
Withdrawal

- Regular use can result in physical dependence
- If use cuts down or stops, user experiences extreme symptoms of withdrawal within only a few hours (restlessness, insomnia, vomiting etc)
- Users experience cravings for the drug during withdrawal which can lead to relapse
- Sudden withdrawal from heroin by heavily dependent users can be fatal

did you know?

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, extreme withdrawal symptoms occur between 48 and 72 hours after the last dose of the drug and typically subside after about one week. However with some people, withdrawal symptoms may continue for months.

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Teens and Heroin Heroin Overdose

Even when a small amount of heroin is injected, it can prove fatal, especially when used in combination with alcohol or other depressant drugs. Injecting heroin increases the risk of overdose. Addicts are at a high risk of overdose right after leaving rehab if they have prescription drugs in their system, according to a Newsday article. If you believe someone is exhibiting any of the following symptoms of a heroin overdose, call 911 immediately. Don't leave your friend alone to die.



Symptoms of Heroin Overdose

- Victim appears sleepy, difficult to rouse or unconscious
- If conscious, victim may be disoriented and / or delirious
- Speech is slurred, movements are sluggish, uncoordinated and weak
- Breathing is slow, shallow and / or labored
- Lips and / or fingernails may be tinged blue
- Vomiting may occur. If so, turn them on their side
- The tongue may be discolored and the mouth may be very dry
- Pulse is weak and blood pressure is low
- Pupils are very small, "pinpoint"
- Loss of bladder control

did you know?

According to a 2009 NY Times article, 25 people in Nassau County died of heroin overdoses within the first half of the year, more than the homicides and drunk driving deaths combined. In 2008, 46 people fatally overdosed on heroin, up from 27 in 2007.

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Teens and Heroin Support Groups

[Long Island Crisis Center](#) -

24/7 crisis intervention counseling and information
Drug Line: (516) 481-4000

[Nassau Alliance for Addiction Services \(NAFAS\)](#)
(516) 679-1111

[NYS OASAS Hope Line](#)
(877) HOPE-NY 1-877-846-7369

National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) for Teens

[Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence \(LICADD\)](#)

If you suspect someone you know of using heroin, call (516) 747-2606, and they can help you with treatment options.



Support groups are available for both addicts and those in close relationships with addicts.

[Narcotics Anonymous \(NA\)](#) is a 12 step drug addiction recovery program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

[Click here](#) for more information and local meeting times.
Nassau County Help Line (516) 827-9500

[Nar-Anon](#) is a group for relatives and friends who are concerned about the addiction or drug problem of another.

[Click here](#) for more information and local meeting times.
New York Nar-Anon information Hotline (800) 984-0066

Also check out our [Links](#) and [Treatment](#) pages.

did you know?

Many of heroin's newest addicts are in their teens or early 20s; many also come from middle or upper-middle class suburban families.

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Contact the Heroin Prevention Task Force for any questions: info@heroinprevention.com