

## What is heroin?

**Heroin is an opiate** that produces a “downer” effect that quickly induces a state of relaxation and euphoria. Like other opiates, it blocks the brain’s ability to perceive pain. Heroin is produced from morphine, a naturally occurring substance that comes from the seedpod of poppy plants. Heroin is also known as smack, horse, brown sugar, dope, H, junk, skag, skunk, white horse, China white, and Mexican black tar.

## What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid analgesic that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. It is typically used to treat patients with severe pain or to manage pain after surgery. Street names for fentanyl or for fentanyl-laced heroin include Apache, China Girl, China White, Dance Fever, Friend, Goodfella, Jackpot, Murder 8, TNT, and Tango and Cash.

## Who is using?

The image of a heroin addict lying in a filthy, dark alley is obsolete. Today, the addict could be **12-17 years old**, play video games, appear smart, trendy and show none of the common traces of heroin use, such as needle marks on his or her arm.

The addict could also be a **middle-aged man with a job and family** who can function next to normal and keep his use hidden, or even a **young woman** between the ages of 18 and 25.

These images have changed because **heroin is available in various forms that are easier to consume, more affordable and easier to obtain**. A person who might think twice about putting a needle in his or her arm may more readily smoke or sniff the same drug. But this is falsely reassuring and may give one the idea that there is less risk.

The truth is that **heroin in all its forms is dangerous and addictive. Addiction to heroin often begins with dependence on prescription painkillers. Anyone can become addicted. This epidemic is not somewhere else. It’s here. It’s affecting our city and our suburbs.**

## Why is heroin use increasing?

- Demand among younger users.
- Pill progression from prescription painkillers.
- Pressure from dealers to switch from crack and prescription drugs to more-profitable heroin.

## Resources:

- If you are even thinking about trying heroin, or using, or know someone who is, call the Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County **24-hour hotline**, operated by FrontLine Service, at **216-623-6888**.
- Visit [www.adamhsc.org](http://www.adamhsc.org) for information about treatment centers in Cuyahoga County and other information about the heroin epidemic. You can view program and contact information from **St. Vincent Charity Rosary Hall: 216-363-2580 (adults)**, **Salvation Army Harbor Light: 216-781-2121 (adults)**, **Recovery Resources: 216-431-4131 (children/adolescents & adults)**, **New Directions: 216-591-0324 (children/adolescents)**, **Stella Maris: 216-781-0550 (adults)** and **Catholic Charities Matt Talbot Inn: 216-781-0288; Matt Talbot for Women: 216-634-7500 (adults)**, and **ORCA House: 216-231-3772 (adults)**.
- Visit [www.letsfaceheroin.com](http://www.letsfaceheroin.com) for information about where people with heroin addiction and their family members can find help. It also include information about the epidemic and personal stories by those touched by the epidemic. This site was developed by the office of Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty.
- Call **United Way 211** (or 216-436-2000) to speak to an Information Specialist who will suggest agencies and other resources to assist you, or visit [www.211cleveland.org](http://www.211cleveland.org).
- Visit [dontgetmestartedohio.org](http://dontgetmestartedohio.org) for community outreach initiatives and engagement strategies to increase awareness and the openness to discuss the issue of prescription drug misuse and abuse among youth and young adults.
- Parents, students and all concerned citizens should visit **Robby’s Voice** at [www.robbyvoice.com](http://www.robbyvoice.com), for information on identifying the warning signs of substance abuse and getting access to the resources needed to live a drug free life.
- Cover2 Resources is dedicated to connecting families of loved ones living with opiate/heroin addiction to treatment and recovery resources. Information and podcasts from leadership at local leading organizations are available at [www.cover2.org](http://www.cover2.org).
- **Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone)** provides free naloxone kits and opioid prevention and awareness resources. More information can be found at [www.adamhsc.org](http://www.adamhsc.org).



## HEROIN: Now what?

*Heroin deaths continue to rise and with fentanyl now in our community with a vengeance, deaths by overdose are rising. Deaths by heroin overdose have increased from 161 in 2012 to 275 in 2015.*

*In 2016, with the onset on fentanyl, we have seen 148 overdose deaths in the first quarter of this year. At this startling rate, we can expect more than 500 deaths this year- that’s nearly double the number of deaths last year. We advanced from an epidemic to a tsunami.*

*To help save lives from the dangers of opioids, heroin and fentanyl, the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County created this brochure with local information on prevention, treatment and recovery.*



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Eugenia Cash, LSW, MSSA, CDCA  
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Chief Executive Officer

## How would I know if someone is using heroin/fentanyl?

- **Drowsiness.** A once cheerful person can turn sad and may seem tired when under the influence of heroin/fentanyl/opioids. Other signs may include nausea, loss of appetite, headaches and dry mouth.
- **Changes in friends.** Users will begin to hang around with other users. Even best friends will be left behind for heroin/fentanyl/opioids.
- **Drug evidence and paraphernalia.** Heroin can be smoked, snorted or injected. Depending on the method, you may find traces of the drug or paraphernalia of drug use. Heroin may be a powdery or crumbly substance, ranging from off-white to dark brown. Black tar heroin is nearly black and is sticky instead of powdery. You might find syringes, small glass or metal pipes, dirty spoons, lighters, scales, coffee grinders, small plastic bags and belts or rubber tubing. Fentanyl can be sold as a patch, a small piece of film that can be dissolved under the tongue and a pill meant to be lodged inside the cheek. In hospital settings, fentanyl can be injected. For the individual abusing the drug outside a hospital, this is highly dangerous, as the difference between a therapeutic dose and a deadly dose is very small. Fentanyl is being sold in a form that is a “look-alike” to oxycodone. If these items are found, there is usually little question about the purpose.
- **Money problems.** Drugs costs money. People addicted will ask friends and family for loans, or may turn to stealing money or items to sell.
- **Missing possessions.** You may notice that a person’s possessions are missing, such as TVs, stereos, DVD players, computers, etc. They are missing because selling personal items is a common way to raise money for addictions.
- **Track marks.** People who shoot heroin into their blood stream will begin to have needle marks on various parts of their body. These “tracks” will become harder and harder to hide.

## What should I do?

Individuals abusing opioids/heroin/fentanyl need professional help. There are detoxification and treatment programs available in Cuyahoga County: contact the **ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County 24-hour information and referral line - 216-623-6888**, or visit **www.adamhscc.org for a listing of treatment providers**. You can talk to your primary care physician or even go to the hospital emergency room for help. Behavioral therapy, counseling, help with withdrawal symptoms - which can be important if the drug has done significant organ damage - is available. The first step is to seek help. From there, sticking to treatment is the most important thing. Heroin abuse is a scary aspect of drug culture. Users can get very sick, very fast and are less likely to seek medical treatment for illnesses because getting high is their priority.

## What else should I know?

Addiction to heroin and fentanyl often begins with **dependence on prescription painkillers**. If you or a loved one are prescribed a prescription painkiller, the first thing to do is keep it away from other members of your household or visitors. If you did not use the entire prescription, dispose of the medicine properly by using the **Cuyahoga County Prescription Drug Drop-off Program**. Visit **www.rxdrugdropbox.org** to find a location near you.

Although it may be difficult, **you may have to call the police if you know that a loved one has been stealing from you, or have evidence that he or she is using heroin and/or fentanyl**. Once the police are involved **your loved one will be entered into the criminal justice system** and depending on the judge, may be able to participate in Cuyahoga County Drug Court. Over 300 individuals have entered the program with the goal to break the cycle of recidivism by addressing an offender’s drug dependency. The Drug Court, overseen by Judge David T. Matia, adheres to science based principals only accepting those assessed as drug dependent. **Drug Court exists to accept more challenging offenders such as people with repeat criminal histories or opiate dependencies**. The Common Pleas Drug Court collaborates with the Cleveland Municipal Drug Court, overseen by Judge Anita Laster Mays, under the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Greater Cleveland Drug Court umbrella. Both courts share treatment resources, case managers and graduation ceremonies.

**Learn about Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone).** Naloxone is an opiate blocker (antagonist) that can reverse the effects of an opiate overdose. Overdose deaths are especially common after an individual has had a period of sobriety, such as immediately after detoxification, upon leaving residential treatment, or when leaving jail or prison. Naloxone is easily given to an unconscious person as a nasal spray. It will not harm someone who is not experiencing an overdose. It has no effect on those who overdose on cocaine, methamphetamines, or alcohol. **Free Naloxone Kits are available** to a person addicted to heroin and/or friends and family **on a walk-in basis every Friday** through Project DAWN, **from 9:00 a.m. - noon at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health**, 5550 Venture Dr., Parma, OH 44130; on Tuesdays from 12:00 p.m. - 4:0 p.m. and Fridays from **1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland**, 12201 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, 44106; and on **Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Thomas F. McCafferty Health Center**, 4242 Lorain Ave., Cleveland 44113. Ohio law contains a “**Good Samaritan**” clause that blankets prosecution of someone who gives naloxone to an overdosing person and then calls 9-1-1, even if the caller was using drugs, to eliminate the fear of calling for help. All first responders including police, firefighters and paramedics can also carry naloxone. **Call 216-778-2100** for more information about Project DAWN.

In addition to Project DAWN, community members can access naloxone at their local Discount Drug Mart or Walgreens or MetroHealth Outpatient Pharmacy, no prescription needed. In the pharmacy setting, naloxone is not free, but is covered by most insurance plans. If a patient does not have insurance, he/she will have to pay out of pocket (for pricing, please contact your local pharmacy).