What Happens To Your Body When You Use Heroin

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By Robert Alexander Center

If you have used heroin in the past, or you are a regular user, you will be aware of some of the experiential changes that can occur when you use it. However, you might not be fully aware of what is actually happening to your body when you are using heroin. Understanding what is going on in the body during heroin use can be a really important way of helping to appreciate how important it is to recover from the addiction.

With that in mind, we are here going to lay out some of the things that you should know about what happens to your body when you use heroin. The more you understand here, the better, so read on.

Immediate Effects

First of all, let's look at the immediate effects on your body that you can expect when you use heroin.

Cardiovascular

There are a number of effects on your cardiovascular system when you take heroin. You might find that your heart rate has slowed considerably, which means that the body is less able to replenish cells with oxygen and remove waste. This affects all other vital functions of the body, including all of the major organs. Your blood pressure decreases too, leaving you feeling light-headed or possibly even fainting.

Pulmonary

Because heroin is a depressant above all, you can notice a difference in a person's breathing very clearly when they have taken heroin. In short, your breath is almost certainly going to be much slower, with many fewer breaths per minute. This happens because the signals going from the diaphragm to the brain are not there as much. In fact, this is the leading cause of heroin overdose death.

Reproductive

There are also some short-term reproductive effects from taking heroin, as well as the long-term effects we will look into shortly. When a user is high on heroin, it is often much more difficult to sustain an erection or to ejaculate. In women, sex drive can radically decrease, and their menstrual cycle can change even as a result of a short-term use of the drug.

Long-Term Effects

As well as those, there are a range of long-term effects which you also need to be aware of, and which should be useful in trying to encourage someone to find the help they need to overcome a heroin addiction.

Oral Health Issues

There are a lot of oral health issues that can arise as a result of heroin use. A heroin user might develop severe gum disease, including puffy and bleeding gums. They might also have cracked or broken teeth as a result of lacking the right vitamins.

Skin Problems

Skin problems can occur as a result of scratching from feeling too itchy, and from using needles. You might have abscesses and scars, which may never fade in some cases.

Weak Immune System

In general, your immune system is likely to be much weakened as a result of using heroin a lot. That means it will be easier to catch diseases and get sick, and your health will generally suffer a lot in this way.

Sleep Problems

Those who use heroin frequently may have problems sleeping well at night, and insomnia can be a very common and lifelong issue for such individuals. Often, it might feel as though getting high is the only way to get to sleep.

Sexual Functioning

In men, long-term heroin use is related to poor sperm motility and other problems with the sperm. In women, there might be issues with pain during sex, menstrual cycles which are unpredictable, and a much lowered sex drive.

Heart Infections

You can even get heart infections from long-term heroin use – something which can be deadly and extremely painful.

Organ Failure

Organ failure can happen as a result of liver disease, kidney disease, or lung problems, all of which can be brought about by heroin use. This can happen even years after taking heroin.

Mental Health

Because the drug affects the brain so directly, one's mental health will also be affected, and a long-term heroin user might struggle to keep their mental health intact. You might experience severe depression, anxiety, and many other similar issues in the long-term from using heroin.

As you can see, there are many ways in which your body is going to be negatively affected by heroin use, both in the long-term and immediately after using it. If you think you might need some help or advice, or you are seeking to begin your addiction recovery process, get in touch today.

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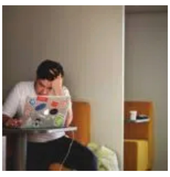

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