

Why is Heroin So Addictive?

by Robert Alexander Center | Feb 18, 2022 | Blog | 0 comments



Originally prescribed as a non-addictive miracle drug to get people off morphine in the 1800s, [heroin addiction](#) quickly surpassed what medical professionals of the time were capable of dealing with. Individuals still struggle with the extremely addictive drug derived from the Poppy plant two hundred years later.



At the Robert Alexander Center, our clients battle addiction with comprehensive treatment and expert professional care. Starting with detox, our rehabilitation campus is designed to support individuals as they progress through each stage of recovery and empower them to make the changes permanent.

Let us help you battle addiction with [our individualized treatment](#) plans at RAC.

How is Heroin Made?

Heroin is a derivative of the poppy plant, native to Western and Central Europe. The initial sap-like substance is opium, but that can be derived down to morphine and then processed again to make heroin. A final processing of the drug can make methadone.

Heroin was initially made as a “non-addictive” countermeasure to morphine; however, the scientists made an incorrect assumption. Heroin is just as addictive, if not more addictive, than morphine.

When it’s made, heroin is typically in a powdered form. However, it can be found in a black tar-like substance called “black tar heroin.” Heroin is typically stored in its powdered form and then dissolved in water, smoked, or injected.

Heroin is so closely linked to opiate and opioid prescription painkillers that it is often the first drug used after an individual has been cut off from their prescription pain medication. Research has shown that 4-6% of individuals transition to heroin from opioid painkillers. Additionally, 80% of individuals who use heroin indicate that they initially misused prescription opioids to start.

Why is Heroin So Addictive?



Several things that make heroin so addictive are how well it works and how quickly it works. Heroin is a fast-acting opioid analgesic. That means it works quickly to block the pain from entering into the opioid receptors. This nearly immediate high provides pain relief and a euphoric high; however, heroin is also processed quickly by your body. Approximately 30 minutes after using heroin, half of the drug has been processed out of the system. However, the remaining half can be detectable for up to 90 days with hair follicle tests.

Between how fast-acting heroin is and how well it works, an individual’s reward receptors respond positively to the physical feelings the drug creates and learns to signal this as an ideal state. This causes the body to crave and want more of the drug, and using more can lead to addiction.

What are the Signs of Heroin Addiction?

Signs of heroin addiction mimic other opiate and opioid addiction symptoms. Like prescription painkillers, individuals who misuse heroin might display certain physical and psychological symptoms that indicate something is wrong.

Psychologically, individuals who develop a heroin addiction may have changes in personality, behavior, and major relationships. Addicted individuals will spend a lot of their time using drugs, thinking about drugs, planning use, or thinking about ways to obtain the drug.

Addiction also impacts every part of an individual’s life. This could lead to problems with work, major relationships, and other social and legal problems that stem from heroin use.

Physically, individuals who use heroin find themselves on a euphoric high, but that is really where the “fun” ends. Heroin addicts often experience itchiness, dry mouth, nausea and vomiting, a heavy feeling that leaves them unable to move and nod off between consciousness and semi-consciousness when using the drug.

Additionally, long-term use of heroin can lead to insomnia, vein collapse from injection, constipation, infection of the heart, sexual dysfunction in men, irregular menstrual cycles for women, and users can develop or worsen mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder.

How to Find Heroin Addiction Treatment

Finding a supportive heroin addiction treatment center means finding a location that can support an individual through every step of the recovery process. Battling chronic heroin use takes time, motivation, and dedication.

At the Robert Alexander Center, we can help clients take on this challenge. Our clients have access to [state-of-the-art detoxification](#), inpatient treatment, and [outpatient addiction](#) care. Our clients have access to traditional and alternative therapeutic treatments, nutritional health, and physical health care routines through multiple mental health resources.

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The Robert Alexander Center for Recovery is a brand new, state-of-the-art addiction treatment center in Kentucky, offering evidence-based treatment for substance abuse.

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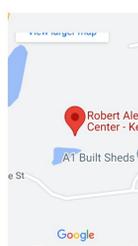
- [Home](#)
- [Tour](#)
- [About](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

Treatment Solutions

- [Detoxification](#)
- [Residential](#)
- [Partial Hospitalization](#)
- [Outpatient Programs](#)
- [Aftercare & Alumni](#)

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- [Alcohol Abuse](#)
- [Opioid Addiction](#)
- [Heroin Addiction](#)
- [Benzo Addiction](#)
- [Cocaine Addiction](#)
- [Crystal Meth Addiction](#)
- [Drug Addiction](#)
- [Alcoholism](#)

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- [Media & Videos](#)
- [Last Articles](#)
- [Careers](#)

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- [Louisville, Kentucky](#)
- [Lexington, Kentucky](#)
- [Bowling Green, Kentucky](#)
- [Corbin, Kentucky](#)
- [Richmond, Kentucky](#)
- [Cincinnati, Ohio](#)
- [Nashville, Tennessee](#)

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- [Men](#)
- [Women](#)
- [Professionals](#)
- [LGBTQIA+](#)
- [College & Alumni](#)

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- [30 Day Drug Rehab Program](#)
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- Home
- Tour
- Treatment
 - Detox
 - Residential
 - Partial Hospitalization
 - Intensive Outpatient
 - Outpatient
 - Family Program
 - Aftercare Program
- Reviews
- About
- Admissions