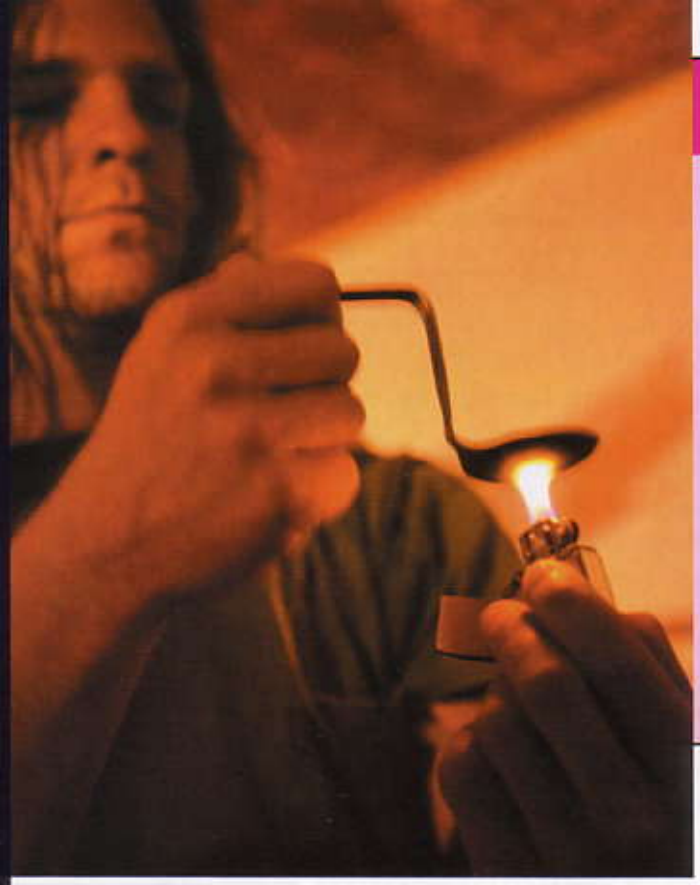


What are Narcotics?

Natural Narcotics are drugs derived from the resin of the poppy plant. The opium poppy grows in the hot dry climates of South America, Mexico, and Southeast and Southwest Asia. Sap from the seed pods of the poppy plant is collected to make raw opium.

Natural narcotics include opium, morphine, heroin and codeine. Other narcotics, such as Meperidine, are manufactured synthetically.

All of these drugs are painkillers – and all are addictive.

How Do Narcotics Work?

Narcotics, sometimes referred to as opiates, work as pain relievers because they act on the opioid receptors in the endorphin transmitters of the body. Opioid receptors are found throughout the brain, spinal cord, nervous system, and intestines. Because narcotics enhance the opioid system by stimulating the receptors, these drugs suppress pain perception.

What Is Heroin?

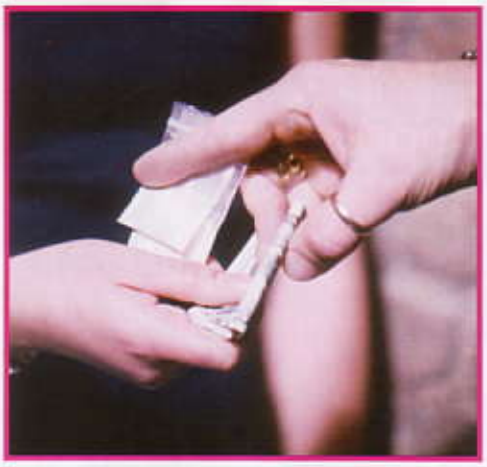
Heroin is a highly addictive drug and is considered the most abused and most rapidly acting opiate. Heroin is processed from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the poppy plant. Pure heroin is a white powder with a bitter taste. Street heroin's color may vary. The color indicates the amount of impurities left from the manufacturing or the presence of food coloring, cocoa, or sugar. Sometimes called "smack," "Big H," "black tar," "China white" or "Mexican brown," heroin can be sniffed or injected. Some dealers mix heroin with amphetamines, chiva, and package it in tablets. Crack addicts mix it with crack and smoke the mixture.

Effects Of Heroin

Heroin tends to relax the user. When heroin is injected, the user feels an immediate "rush." Other initial, but unpleasant effects include restlessness, nausea and vomiting. The user may go back and forth from feeling alert to very drowsy. With very large doses, the user cannot be awakened, the pupils become smaller, and the skin becomes cold, moist, and bluish in color. Breathing slows down and death may occur.

Risks Of Heroin Abuse

Like other illegal drugs, heroin affects the brain. It slows the bodily functions, including breathing and heartbeat. This can lead to instant death. The physical dangers of heroin use depend on the amount, the source, and the way it is used. Over time, heroin users may develop infections of the heart lining and valves, skin abscesses, and congested lungs. Heroin addicts normally inject the drug, which means they run the risk of infection from shared or dirty needles. Diseases commonly found among heroin addicts include blood poisoning, HIV infection, hepatitis, tetanus, liver disease, syphilis, and malaria. AIDS/HIV infection is now one of the leading causes of death among addicts.



What Is Morphine?

Morphine is the most effective drug known to man for relieving pain. Morphine, the active ingredient in most narcotic drugs, controls pain and creates a sense of euphoria. It relaxes muscles, decreases physical activity, and relieves pain and nervousness.

In limited amounts, morphine and other opiates are still used in prescription medicines. One such opiate is paregoric, which is used to treat diarrhea. Another is codeine, which is used in cough medicines. Codeine and morphine have become part of

the illegal drug trade and are widely abused.

What Is Codeine?

Codeine is the most widely used, naturally occurring narcotic in the world. However, most codeine used in the United States is produced from morphine. Codeine is medically prescribed for the relief of moderate pain and cough suppression. Compared to morphine, codeine produces less sedation and respiratory depression and is usually taken orally. Codeine can be found in tablet form, alone or in combination with aspirin or acetaminophen. It is also a primary ingredient in many cough syrups.

What Is Methadone?

During the 19th century, heroin was used to help morphine addicts during withdrawal. Civil War and World War I soldiers took heroin to break their addiction to morphine. However, doctors soon realized that heroin was even more addictive than morphine. To free heroin addicts of their addiction, scientists developed another chemical, methadone.

Today, methadone is used by treatment centers throughout the United States to help heroin addicts during withdrawal. The effects of methadone differ from other narcotics. Methadone's effects last up to 24 hours, permitting injection of the drug once a day. However, methadone is also addictive. In fact, some studies indicate it is as addictive as heroin.

What Is Meperidine?

Meperidine (Demerol) is a synthetic narcotic that is frequently prescribed by doctors to treat pain. Meperdine produces effects similar, but not identical to morphine. Meperidine can be taken in tablet form, syrups, or injections. Meperidine is about one-tenth the strength of morphine. Tolerance to the drug develops very rapidly. Because of the increasing strength needed to mask pain, addiction to Meperidine occurs quickly.

What Is OxyContin?

OxyContin is the trade name for oxycodone hydrochloride. Other street names include, "blue," "kicker," "oxy," and "80." Oxycontin is a time-released pill form of oxycodone, a narcotic used to relieve moderate to severe pain.

OxyContin is an opioid similar to morphine and heroin. It has an increasing analgesic (pain relief) effect with increased doses. For example, the more you take, the better you feel. Other analgesics, like aspirin and acetaminophen have a limit to their effectiveness. But a medication like OxyContin can potentially provide up to four times the relief of non-opioid analgesics. This makes OxyContin an effective treatment for patients suffering from the severe pain of terminal cancer or other chronic pain syndromes.

OxyContin's availability in a time-release formula has increased the dosages of traditional oxycodone from 10 mg to 160 mg per tablet making it more attractive to abusers. Rather than swallowing the pill as indicated, abusers chew, snort, or inject the medication to avoid the time-released mechanism. This leads to an instant and intense euphoric high much like that of heroin or morphine. As with most opiates, abusers develop a tolerance to the drug requiring larger doses to achieve the desired effect — the cycle of dependency and addiction.