Heroin

Drug Classification: Opiate/Narcotic
Addiction Schedule: I
Addiction Potential: High

Modes of Administration
Oral (powder)
Intranasal (snorted into the nose)
Intravenous (dissolved in water & injected)

Onset of Drug Effect(s)
Since heroin crosses the blood-brain barrier very quickly, the onset of action is typically within minutes with effects lasting up to several hours.

Drug Action(s)
Because people who are high on heroin, or craving the next fix, do not use good judgment, they often share needles with other users. Sharing needles means significant risk for HIV infection and hepatitis, two incurable diseases that can ultimately kill.

Heroin is illegal and expensive, so dealers often "cut" it with similar-looking powders, like cocaine or even baking soda or cleansers. Users never know how pure their drug is, so every dose is different. This means that a major overdose could happen at any time...even one use could result in a coma or death. Other signs of an overdose include difficulty breathing, clammy skin, and convulsions.

Acute effects on the mind and body include:
- Feeling "mellow," dreamy or euphoric
- Insomnia
- Nausea and vomiting
- Decreased breathing and heart rate
- Contracted pupils
- Watery eyes
- Runny nose
- Loss of appetite
- Tremor
- Panic
- Chills
- Sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Libido suppression
- Severe itching
- Heavy extremities

Long term effects include:
Addiction. As soon as users come down, they want another fix. The desire for another fix becomes stronger with the more heroin they do. Many addicts resort to stealing from friends and family, and participating in illegal acts like selling drugs or getting involved in prostitution for money.

Signs of an overdose include:
- Difficulty breathing
- Clammy skin
- Convulsions

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