

By The Professionals At Evolve Indy

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3. What Happens To Your Brain When You Use Heroin

If you become addicted to drugs such as heroin, it is not a choice. Substance abuse and disorders can have long-lasting effects on your body, and so it is important to get the help and **treatment** required sooner rather than later. Every year, the lives of millions of people are affected by substance abuse, both those that use substances and those that are related to, or close to those that use them. One of the most common drugs that people get addicted to is heroin and this can have debilitating effects on the body. One of the most severe and notable impacts of heroin is on your brain and this is one of the reasons it can be so dangerous. Heroin causes a plethora of changes in the body and when these impact your brain they can be both long-lasting and also very serious. Some side effects can also continue long after you have discontinued using heroin.

What is Heroin?

Heroin is a very addictive drug which is what makes it such a dangerous one. It is made from morphine and is a class of drugs called opioids. Being a psychoactive substance means that it can affect your brain and the way that you think and act. Heroin can be ingested a few different ways, but the most popular is by being mixed with water and injected. Other ways include sniffing it, smoking it or snorting it. When people use heroin, they get a rush of euphoric good feelings and happiness – which is why it can be so addictive. When the drug wears off, these feelings change to depression and can lead people to take more heroin to avoid these negative feelings.

What Happens to Your Brain When You Use Heroin?

It stops the brain from producing opioids

Opioids are largely involved with feelings such as pain and pleasure. If you take heroin over time, it can stop your brain from producing the hormones that cause happiness. This is because your brain is receiving so much stimulation from other sources that it will stop making its own. It is also what causes you to have a dependency on heroin and will instigate severe withdrawal symptoms after you stop taking it. As well as having you become addicted in order to receive this chemical high, you also soon become intolerant to the levels and start requiring a higher amount to get the same high.

It creates long-term chemical imbalances

If you use heroin for a prolonged period of time, it can lead to you having chemical imbalances in your brain. This can be damaging both in the present and in the future going forward. It can leave you with both psychological and physical symptoms that arise. These can affect your quality of life.

It can cause symptoms similar to dementia

If you suffer from a heroin addiction and continue to use it over a period of time, then you could find yourself suffering from cognitive issues similar to that of dementia. This is because it causes inflammation to the brain and also proteins to build up. In turn, this replicates the structural changes that Alzheimer's disease is associated with. This can cause severe cognitive impairment with symptoms such as confusion and memory loss.

It can deteriorate your brain's white matter

White matter plays an important part in your brain function and if you use heroin, over time it can deteriorate this white matter. This white matter is made up of nerve fibers that are extensions of nerve cells. They are surrounded by a fatty covering called myelin which is what sends and receives signals and messages around your body quickly. Without this, your brain cannot process actions quickly and it can lead to a deterioration of both cognitive and physical ability.

How Do You Get Help from Heroin Abuse?

The brain damage which can be caused by using heroin can be extensive and it is not clear whether it can be reversed. This is why it is so vital that as soon as someone notices any sorts of changes, they need to stop abusing heroin and get the appropriate help. This can prevent the

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