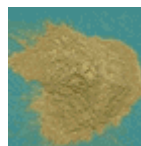


Heroin

How it works

It starts life as the dried milk of the opium poppy, which is then made into a drug called morphine. Doctors use morphine as a pain killer, but it is not difficult to make heroin from it, which is more than twice as strong. It usually comes as a white or lightish brown powder, and is cut with other substances like sugar and paracetamol. Heroin users sometimes sniff or smoke it, but more often they inject into their veins. This makes the effects much stronger, but much, much more dangerous because of the danger of injecting all sorts of really awful things including the AIDS virus and hepatitis. It's a sedative, which means it depresses the nervous system and means you can't feel pain in your body or your emotions (until it wears off).



What the Law says

It's very bad stuff to use or deal in, so it's Class A drug. If you just possess it you can get a huge fine and up to 7 years in prison, and for supplying it to other people, up to Life in prison. A very few doctors are allowed to prescribe it to addicts, to stop them from committing crimes and to bring them off slowly.

History factoid

In the 1700s and 1800s China had a big problem with opium addicts. Amazingly, the opium was deliberately imported by the British East India Company.

Amazing thing about it

The poet Coleridge had a dream on opium where he wrote 300 lines of the famous poem 'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan...' When he woke up, he copied down 22 lines from memory when a man knocked at the door. Coleridge answered it and when he came back to the table, found he'd forgotten the rest. Doh!

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