

## Signs of Opioid or Heroin Abuse

- Itching and scratching
- Constricted, pinpoint pupils
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Weight loss
- Depression
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Loss of old friendships
- Problems in school
- Loss of interest in activities
- Stolen credit cards and checks
- Pawn slips in the house or vehicle
- Theft of household valuables
- Missing money
- Frequent, secret phone calls

## Signs of Heroin Abuse

- Track marks on arms
- Aluminum foil with burn marks
- Finding spoons with burn marks
- Bottles of vinegar and/or bleach



# Heroin and Opioid

For more resources go to:  
MA Substance Abuse Information and  
Education Helpline; 800-327-5050,  
Helpline-online.com

The Massachusetts Organization for  
Addiction Recovery; moar-recovery.org

**Information adapted from:**  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:  
National Institute on Drug Abuse  
Franklin County Opioid and Awareness Task Force  
Foundation for a Drug-Free World  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health:  
Bureau of Substance Abuse Services

Awareness and  
Treatment  
Foxborough Board of Health



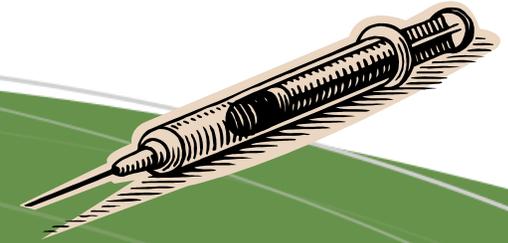
## What should you do if you suspect someone you know is using?

Be direct and talk to them. Wait until they are sober and you are calm enough to have a discussion rather than an explosion.

Tell them about the changes you have noticed in their behavior and the reasons you are worried. Use words such as “love” and “I care” or “we care”. Your initial conversation should be based on concern, not contempt. Do not tell them that they are a loser, a waste, or a disgrace. This will only alienate them further.

Make it clear that you are not willing to drop the issue until it is addressed. If they get angry and defensive, do not take it personally. Their reaction is a defense mechanism.

Do not cover for them. If they are in trouble, let them experience the consequences. Resources and support are available for both the addict and friends and family.



## What should you know about opioids, heroin, and addiction?

### *What is drug addiction?*

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, addiction is a complex and chronic disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences.

Overuse or misuse of drugs, also known as drug abuse, sometimes leads to drug addiction.

### *Why do people abuse drugs?*

People abuse drugs because they want to change something about their lives. Some reasons why people abuse drug include to feel good, to feel better, to fit in, to experiment, or to escape or relax.

### *What are opioids?*

Opioids are synthetic medications that relieve pain such as Vicodin and Percocet, Codeine, Oxycontin and related drugs.

Opioid use can become problematic when taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than prescribed.

Regular or long-term use of opioids can lead to physical dependence and, in some cases, addictions.

Prescription opioid addiction can also lead to heroin addiction because heroin is often cheaper and easier to obtain.

### *What is heroin?*

Heroin is a highly addictive illegal opiate drug made from poppy plants. Heroin is a refined form of morphine. Morphine is used for pain relief, however heroin has no medical benefits. Heroin usually appears as white or brown powder and is also known as “dope” or “brown”.

Heroin is often injected, creating additional risks to the users such as AIDS, Hepatitis C, and other infections.

Recent studies suggest a shift from injecting heroin to snorting or smoking because of the myth that these absorption methods are safer.