

Help is out there

Although beginning a journey towards overcoming heroin/opioid dependency may seem daunting, there is help out there to get the assistance and information vital to success.

A number of treatment choices are available and working out which one is most suitable is an important decision. For help making that decision, visit www.myrecoverymychoice.co.uk or ask your doctor for a My Recovery My Choice information pack. This will give you the lowdown on all the treatment options.

Your doctor is one important source of information but there are also a number of patient support groups that can offer advice and assistance in making the right choice.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Alliance

www.m-alliance.org

Alliance Helpline

0845 122 8608

Drugscope

www.drugscope.org.uk

TalktoFrank

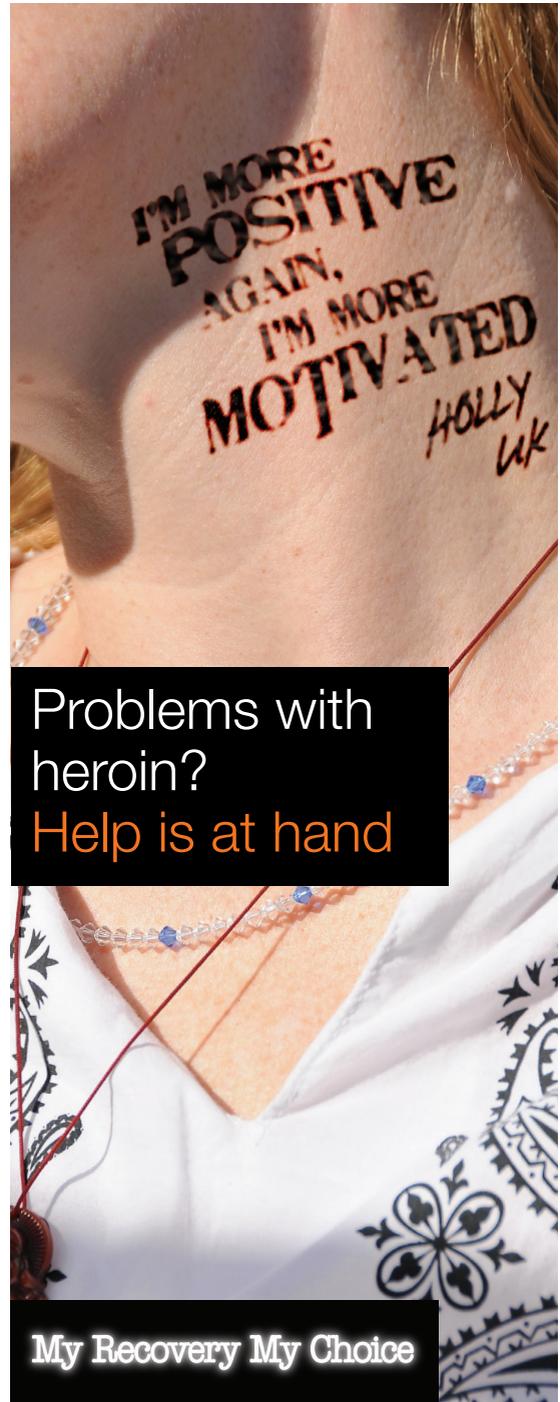
www.talktofrank.com

AdFam

www.adfam.org.uk

Addaction

www.addaction.org.uk



Problems with
heroin?
Help is at hand

My Recovery My Choice

Is it a **problem**?

Dependence on heroin and other opioids doesn't happen overnight but usually develops over a period of continued substance use. Everyone's level of dependence is different, and it can be difficult to realise when you've crossed the line from use to dependence.

These are the kind of things which might be going on in your life. The more you can identify with the things on the list, the more likely it is you are, or the person you know is, dependent.

- "It's not just weekends"... I'm using heroin for longer periods.
- "I need a lot more"... the same dose of heroin doesn't give me the same feeling as it used to.
- "I can't seem to stop"... I've tried to stop using heroin but despite my efforts I have not been able to.
- "They've said it's a problem"... I've been asked by my partner or family to stop using heroin.
- "I'm rattling"... I experience withdrawal symptoms (aches and pains, sweats, restlessness) when I stop using heroin.
- "I can't stop thinking about it"... I've got heroin – how I'm going to get it, when I'm going to get it – going around my mind all the time.
- "I don't want to but"... I've continued to use heroin/opioids despite negative consequences.
- "It's 24/7"... I spend lots of time and effort, even committing crime, to obtain or use heroin.
- "It's my main thing now"... I've missed work, stopped seeing non-drug-using mates or started going out just so that I can use heroin.

What is **dependence**?

Taking heroin/opioids on a regular basis causes changes to take place in the brain and nervous system. This leads to the need to continue taking heroin just to feel normal. What's more, the body keeps on changing, adapting its own responses so that more and more drugs are often needed just to get through the day. It's little wonder that heroin users often say that they feel "out of control" and that heroin has taken over their lives.

Unfair **stigma**

Using heroin and similar drugs has been heavily stigmatised in the past – just as having a disability or a mental health problem has been. But times are changing. Most people recognise now that people with drug dependence have a medical problem and need treatment.

What happens **next**?

If you (or someone you know) feel ready to make changes to your heroin use, then there are a number of options available. Treatment is an important component of managing heroin dependence and can, over time, reverse the complex changes that have taken place in the body.

A number of different treatments are available and more can be learnt about them at www.myrecoverymychoice.co.uk. Treatment can help manage withdrawal symptoms and cravings and provide the help needed to start beating dependence. For many, treatment offers a way to get some control back over their brain, their body and their life.