

JERICHO UFSD
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A DRUG PREVENTION & WELLNESS UPDATE

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HEROIN

LEGAL UPDATE



Until recently, heroin was rarely considered a problem among middle class students. But lately, heroin has been showing up in unexpected places including Long Island. Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi reported “that during the first half of 2009, Nassau County saw 27 heroin-related deaths, more than the number of drunk driving-related and homicide deaths combined.” Due to the high purity of the heroin available for sale on the streets today, a shift from injecting heroin to snorting or smoking it has occurred, making its consumption easier and less conspicuous.

Furthermore, lower heroin prices and a generation of young people who have experimented with *medicine cabinet drugs* like oxycotin and vicodin, make heroin seem less dangerous and more attractive. Teens that have ingested opiate prescription drugs can become quickly addicted and turn to heroin for its less expensive high.

Due to the large increases in heroin use and heroin related deaths, Nassau County Legislators recently signed a new bill into law designed to address suburban teen use. The new "Natalie Ciappa Law requires police to notify a school district when anyone is arrested in connection with heroin possession within that specific school district's boundaries or the when there is an arrest of a student from that district anywhere in the county.”

Legislator Dave Mejia's' titled this legislation “after an 18-year-old high school student from Massapequa died of a heroin overdose at a party in June of this year.”

“In compliance with the Natalie Ciappa Law, the police department is working to establish and implement a Nassau Drug Mapping Index (NDMI) website available to the public that will list arrests for possession and sale of heroin and include the nature and class of the arrest, the alleged offender's age and the date, time and location of the arrest.” *Bill to Combat Suburban Teen Heroin Epidemic Signed Into Law, Levittown Tribune.*

SOBERING FACTS

Heroin affects the brain. Heroin enters the brain quickly. It slows down the way one thinks, slows down reaction time, and slows down memory. Heroin profoundly impacts the way one acts and the decisions they make.

Heroin affects the body. Heroin poses special problems for those who inject it because of the risks of HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other diseases that can occur from sharing needles. These health problems can be passed on to sexual partners and newborns.

Heroin is super-addictive. Heroin is highly addictive because it enters the brain so rapidly. It particularly affects those regions of the brain responsible for producing physical dependence. It is estimated that about 23 percent of individuals who use heroin become dependent on it.

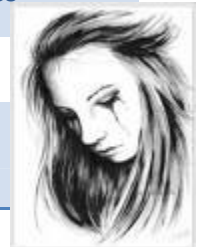
Heroin is not what it may seem. Despite the glamorization of “heroin” chic in films, fashion, and music, heroin use can have tragic consequences that extend far beyond its users. Fetal effects, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, violence, and crime are all linked to its use.

Heroin can kill. Heroin is one of the top two frequently reported drugs by medical examiners in drug abuse deaths.

US Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA Health Information Network

HOW TO SPOT SIGNS OF HEROIN USE

Dry mouth	Puffy face
Small pupils	Runny nose
Cold, sweaty palms.	School grades drop
Alternately wakeful and drowsy	Paranoia
Signs of injections or infections	Silliness or giddiness
Loss or increase of appetite	Moodiness, irritability or nervousness
Inability to sleep	Shallow breathing
“Droopy” appearance, as if arms and legs are heavy	Change in behavior or attitude



*Signs of drug use are not definitive; therefore anyone with concern should consult a professional.

LOCAL PREVENTION & INTERVENTION EFFORTS

1. Participation in the Nassau County Heroin Summit Task Force Committee by Jericho School staff members.
2. Possible participation in proposed *Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet Program* by Jericho community members. This program would provide proper disposal of unused prescription medications.
3. Increased parent and community awareness regarding the changing landscape of substance abuse within Nassau County via Jericho High School Health & Safety Committee.

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