

Smack is Back

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Narcotic officers all over Trumbull County say they are making more and more undercover heroin transactions. "We are seeing a resurgence of heroin," said an undercover agent.

Heroin, also known as Smack and Horse, has been around for decades, but the extremely dangerous narcotic is making a huge comeback basically because it's cheap and easy to get.

"Oxycontin is so costly and somewhat harder to get, although you can still obtain it. People are going to the heroin," the agent says.

Users say once they try heroin there is no turning back. "No matter who you are, the first time you do it, that buzz is so good, unreal," says one former user.

Noone knows the addicting power of this Opiate better than Steve Pumphrey. He got hooked two years ago, and has been trying for the last year to stay off of it. Blowing through all his money supporting his \$150 a day habit. He now finds himself recovering at the Warren Family Mission Shelter.

He tells us he hopes to never come in contact with heroin again, but admits it's a daily battle. After nearly dying from an overdose, he was driven to use heroin again. He's not alone. Narcotic officers in Warren and all over the Valley say they are making heroin arrests almost on a daily basis.

"What we are running into is officers discovering it on traffic stops, finding needles, spoons, cooking it up in transit," said Hubbard Township Police Chief Todd Coonce.

And heroin's deadly effects are also creeping up. "Last October to the middle of November, in that six week period we had a number of heroin overdoses that included young people in their 20's and people over 60," said Trumbull County Coroner Humphrey Germaniuk.

Many of us are under the false impression that the drug is used by people we would never meet; sold somewhere far away in a dark alley in the belly of an urban housing project. But heroin isn't just available in the inner cities. It has crossed over to suburban neighborhoods. Some of the former users say they would buy it just about anywhere, including several communities, like Vienna and Fowler. They also say dealers will make home deliveries.

Most of those addicted to the drug, say without it, they become physically sick and cannot function. "After a while, it wasn't fun; just try to stop from being sick," the former user said.

All the recovering addicts have this piece of advice for anyone thinking of trying heroin. "Just don't do it. That's the best way. Just don't do it," the former user says.

"As long as you get enough, it's got to be worth it for them, but they'll bring it to us or meet us in Vienna or something like that," a former user says. "Even after I o.d.'d on it and being in a coma for eight days, four days out of the hospital, I was right back to it, right back on it," Pumphrey said.