

ANTHRAX IS KILLING HEROIN USERS

EARLY TREATMENT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Anthrax is a bug that has got into batches of heroin in Scotland and England.

The anthrax is causing serious and life threatening infections in heroin users.

You can get anthrax whether you inject, smoke or inhale your heroin.

Typical signs of anthrax include:

- lots of swelling and redness where you injected
- a fever and headache, or
- feeling ill and finding it hard to breathe.

If you think you have anthrax, **immediately** go to your nearest hospital emergency department and tell them.

To get advice or to get help to treat drug addiction in contact Detox 5 on 0800 515282

More information on anthrax is available on the HPA website:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1191942145749>

What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a bug which doctors think got into some batches of heroin sold across Scotland. This is now happening in England.

Anthrax can kill if it is not treated quickly. A substantial number of people have already died from anthrax.

How can you get anthrax?

All anthrax infections in recent weeks have been among heroin users.

You can get anthrax by injecting and by smoking or inhaling heroin.

How can I tell if my heroin is contaminated with anthrax?

Unfortunately, there is no way of telling if the heroin you have is contaminated with the anthrax bug.

It may look the same and it may dissolve or burn the same, but it could still contain anthrax.

What are the Symptoms?

If you inject heroin:

You may have lots of swelling and redness at the injecting site, leading to an abscess or ulcer.

You may have other symptoms such as fever and headache.

If you smoke or inhale heroin:

You may feel ill and find it hard to breathe.

You may have a fever or flu-like symptoms or a bad headache.

What should I do if I have these symptoms?

If you have any of the symptoms, you need to get medical help very quickly.

Go to a hospital emergency department **immediately**.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF GETTING ANTHRAX

1. There is no safe way of taking heroin.
2. Stop using heroin; but if not, at least use less.
3. Go to your local drug treatment service to discuss support and use of heroin substitutes such as methadone or buprenorphine.
4. If you continue to use heroin, don't share needles, syringes, filters, cookers/spoons or other 'works' with other drug users.
5. If you stop heroin and then re-start, be careful at first - so you don't overdose because of any lost tolerance.

BE AWARE OF THE EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

If injecting heroin:

- redness and excessive swelling at the site of injection.

If heroin is smoked or inhaled:

- fever and flu-like symptoms and possible breathing difficulties.

SEEK HELP AT YOUR NEAREST HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Immediate treatment with antibiotics can be life saving.

PLEASE TELL OTHERS ABOUT THIS INFECTION.

**For more information please
contact**

Detox 5

0800 515282