

SHAKER HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL COURT *COURT COURIER*

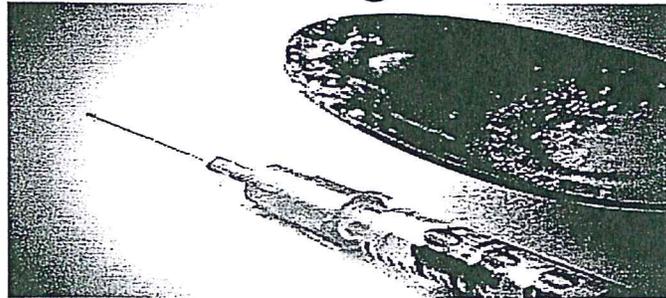
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ACTIVITIES DURING THE 2nd QUARTER, 2018



Know the Tell-Tale Signs of Heroin Use!!!



Years ago, we thought of drug users as "junkies" from some distant locale. That is no longer the case especially with the heroin epidemic. Pre-teens and middle-aged neighbors in this court district may be users. Heroin use is increasing as some switch from painkillers to illegal drugs and drug dealers push heroin as they make a larger profit on heroin than crack. It is available in many forms and can be sniffed or smoked. It is more affordable than ever! Recognizing signs of heroin use could save a life, save an entire family and bring much needed help. There are both environmental and physical signs you might discover if you know what to look for.

Of course, you could come across the actual drug and paraphernalia used to take the drug. Heroin may be powdery or crumbly and cream colored to dark brown. There is also a substance called "black tar heroin" which is black and sticky. Syringes, glass or metal pipes, lighters, scales, dirty spoons, coffee grinders, small plastic baggies and belts or rubber tubing may be used to get high on heroin. However, there may be more subtle environmental and physical signs that point to drug addiction.

- You might notice that your friend is missing possessions like a TV or computer. Addictions cost money and addicts often sell their possessions for drug money. The friend may also be in need of funds and asking you for loans.

- A once happy person may seem sad and tired when under the influence. She may have sudden changes in routine and emotions.
- In order to cover needle marks, a person may consistently wear long sleeves even in hot weather. And, as injection sites cause skin irritation, the person may have itchy arms, neck or legs
- You may lose your friend. Social needs become secondary to heroin. Friends may change so they remain close to suppliers and other drug users.
- Your teen may look unhealthy and lack energy. Heroin causes sleepy affects and addiction saps energy. His pupils may look like pin points. (Heroin constricts pupils while many other drugs cause the pupils to dilate.)
- Sudden weight loss may be a clue as heroin will suppress the appetite and frequent vomiting can make eating unappealing.
- A relative may be constantly looking for a new doctor to get more meds and may carry pill bottles at all times.
- A coworker's appearance and hygiene may change. Hair loss, cold and sweaty skin, and a bad complexion may be obvious. And a general lack of concern for cleanliness or appearance may signal addiction. Blackened fingers may be the result of handling burnt foil or spoons.
- The nice kid next door suddenly embarks on a stealing spree to get money for his habit.
- The apartment carpet may have black spots or burn marks from cooked heroin spilling.
- Tables may display plastic bottle caps used to mix heroin powder with water prior to injecting. Broken pieces of a pen or straws can be used to snort heroin or crush opiate pills. (Crushed pills are particularly lethal because when snorted they produce an intense high and greater risk of overdose!)
- Blood spots may be present on furniture, bedding, and clothing or in sinks from injecting veins.
- Plastic bags with torn corners may have held the heroin. Burnt foil and spoons may be used to cook the heroin. Torn Q-tip buds and cigarette filters are used to filter heroin liquid.
- Should you be searching for a family member's drugs, check for missing vent screws and small spaces drugs might be harbored. Small sun glass cases may hold drug "kits."

Environmental signs may also be spotted if you know what to look for.

If you make such a discovery, know that people abusing heroin need help. Call the Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County 24-hour hotline at 216-623-6888. Online at www.adamhscc.org, you can find out about treatment centers. You might also visit www.letsfaceheroin.com for information about where people with heroin addiction and their family can find help. A person in distress can be taken to the hospital emergency room and 911 responders are trained to administer Naloxone which reverses the effects of a heroin overdose. No one can be sure they will not be touched by this epidemic. Being observant and getting help means you care! You could save a life!