**Heroin myths**

**Myth: Heroin is only dangerous if it is injected**

It is true that there are certain risks such as contracting bloodborne diseases that are only associated with injection. However, heroin is an extremely dangerous substance that can cause dependence and addiction no matter how it is used. People who snort or smoke heroin are still exposed to the high-risk lifestyle of a drug addict. They are still placed in compromising situations in order to obtain and use their drug. It is still possible to overdose on heroin even if you are not injecting it.

**Myth: Heroin is only abused by older, more experienced, addicts.**

This is not true and many younger people are experimenting with heroin. It is easily available in most cities which means that kids are exposed to it. Even if a child is afraid of injecting heroin he/she might be encouraged by peers to try smoking or snorting it. We are seeing younger and younger people being admitted to drug rehabilitation centers in South Africa for this drug.

**Myth: Methadone maintenance is more harmful than heroin addiction**

There has been a lot of controversy surrounding methadone maintenance over the past few years. Critics of the program claim that it maintains dependency and if it isn't tightly controlled generates more problems. They believe that a methadone maintenance program keeps the addict sick and doesn't address the underlying causes of addiction. Proponents maintain that so long as it is properly supervised by medical professionals a methadone maintenance program reduces many of the lifestyle risks that heroin addicts would normally face. They argue that overdose is less likely, that addicts do not need to sell possessions or prostitute themselves, and that addicts do not need to frequent the areas where drugs are sold. This is of social benefit.
**Myth: If you try heroin even once you will become addicted immediately**

Addiction is a complex disease that takes a while to develop. It is not the same as physical dependence - you can be physically dependent on a substance but not addicted. It takes time for a heroin user to develop physical tolerance and even though it is a very addictive substance the true state of addiction will also take some time to manifest. **OF COURSE THIS IS NOT A REASON TO EXPERIMENT WITH HEROINO –OVERDOSE AND DEATH ON THE FIRST EXPERIMENT ARE STILL VERY POSSIBLE.**

**Myth: Abstinence is an appropriate treatment for Heroin addiction**

Fact: As much as a heroin addict may want to quit using, the fact is that very few individuals can quit on their own accord. To quit heroin use, a qualified drug rehab program is essential. Programs such as the ones found at Michael’s House, where a caring, expertly-trained provide all phases of the heroin rehab and recovery process is a safe environment.

**Myth: Heroin rehab programs are unpleasant**

Actually a drug rehab center aims to promote a sense of well-being. A comprehensive substance abuse treatment will include elements designed to relax and nurture the addict.