



# Illicit opioids including heroin

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

**Heroin use among the Australian general population is low**, with 0.1%\* reporting consumption in the last 12 months of 2022–2023.[1]



**Opioid use** was responsible for 0.9% of the **total burden of disease and injuries** in Australia in 2018, and 32% of the total burden due to illicit drug use.[2]

In 2019, **43%\*** of people who recently used heroin said they **tried to stop or cut down** in the last 3 months but **could not**. [1]

In 2022–23, **heroin** was the **fourth most common principal drug of concern** (4.5% of treatment episodes) that led clients to seek treatment for their own alcohol or drug use.[3]

Between 2017–18 and 2018–19, the age-standardised rate of **hospitalisations due to heroin poisoning increased** from 3.2 to 4.1 per 100,000.[5]



In 2018–19, **hospitalisations** with a principal diagnosis of **opioid poisoning** were **more likely to involve pharmaceutical opioids** than heroin or opium.[5]

The **weight of national heroin seizures increased** from **388kg** in 2011–12 to a record **1,278kg** in 2020–21.[8]

**27%** of **drug-induced deaths** in Australia in 2022 were due to **heroin**. [4]





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**Main contributors** to opioid use disease and injury burden in 2018:

- **poisoning** 42%
- **drug use disorder** (excluding alcohol) 28%.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Wastewater data analysis** indicates **heroin consumption increased** in both capital city and regional sites between **April and August 2023**.<sup>[6]</sup>





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National Drug Strategy Household Survey findings relate to people aged 14 or older unless specified. An adult is a person aged 18 or older.[1]

(a) 2020 Illicit Drug Reporting System interviews were conducted from June–September, after COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings were introduced. This should be taken into account when comparing data to previous years.

\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

### References

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3. AIHW 2024. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia: early insights. AIHW, Australian Government. accessed 16 April 2024.
4. AIHW 2023. AIHW analysis of the National Mortality Database 2022.
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8. ACIC 2023. Illicit drug data report 2020–21. Canberra: ACIC. Accessed 2 November 2023.

Source: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

(<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia>).

