



Heroin use among the Australian general population is low, with only 0.2% reporting consumption in the last 12 months in 2016.^[1]



Opioid use was responsible for 1.0% of the total burden of disease and injuries in Australia in 2015, and 37% of the total burden due to illicit drug use.^[2]

Main contributors to opioid use disease and injury burden in 2015:

- poisoning 33%
- drug use disorder (excluding alcohol) 31%.^[2]

49% of heroin users use as often as **weekly** in 2016.^[1]

The Australian heroin market was highly stable in terms of **drug availability, pricing and purity** in 2019.^[8]



Number of hospitalisations with a principal diagnosis of opioid (including heroin) poisoning **increased** by 25% between 2007-08 and 2016-17.^[4]



In 2016-17, hospitalisations with a principal diagnosis of **opioid poisoning** were more likely to involve **pharmaceutical opioids** than heroin or opium.^[4]



The **risk of overdose for heroin users is high** and has been increasing in recent years.^[5]



Wastewater data analysis indicates **heroin consumption in Australia was relatively low** in 2019.^[6]



22% of the **drug-induced deaths** in Australia in 2017 were due to heroin.^[7]



In 2019, **heroin (45%)** was one of the **top two most commonly nominated drugs** of choice among people who inject drugs, along with methamphetamine (33%).^[8]

Heroin was the **principal drug of concern in 6%** of closed alcohol and other drug treatment episodes in 2017–18.^[3]



In 2016, **44%** of heroin users said they **tried to stop or cut down but could not**, the highest of any drug type.^[1]

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]

1. AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2017. [National Drug Strategy Household survey 2016: detailed findings](#). Drug statistics series no. 31. Cat. no. PHE 214. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 14 December 2017.
2. AIHW 2019. [Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015](#). Australian Burden of Disease Study series no.19. Cat. no. BOD 22. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 13 June 2019.
3. AIHW 2019. [Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2017–18: key findings](#). Web Report. Viewed 17 April 2019.
4. AIHW 2018. [Opioid harm in Australia and comparisons between Australia and Canada](#). Cat. no. HSE 210. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 9 November 2018.

5. ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2017. [Causes of death, Australia, 2016](#). ABS cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS. Viewed 4 January 2018.

6. ACIC (Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission) 2019. [National wastewater drug monitoring program report 8](#). Canberra: ACIC. Viewed 28 October 2019.

7. AIHW 2019. [Alcohol and other drug use in regional and remote Australia: consumption, harms and access to treatment, 2016–17](#). Cat. no. HSE 212. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 15 March 2019.

8. Peacock A, Uporova J, Karlsson A, Gibbs D, Swanton R, Kelly G et al. 2019. [Australian Drug Trends 2019. Key findings from the National Illicit Drug Reporting System Interviews](#). Sydney: National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

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For more detail, see the full report, *Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia*, which can be downloaded for free from the AIHW website.



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