

“Krokodil” – Flesh eating heroin

At Recovery Happens Counseling Services we have seen a rise in heroin use since the reformulation of Oxycontin. At the peak of “Oxy” use in our area, we asked clients if heroin were available would they use it? They all said yes. Heroin just wasn’t readily available then. It is more available today and certainly much cheaper than Oxy ever was. The article below came out today and we wanted to pass it on. We have not seen “Krokodil” yet, but given the alarming rate of heroin use, we wanted to pass on the information so that everyone can be aware. Just fyi, this was posted today on our website. Each day on our homepage on the left side, it is updated with the latest data on teen/young adult drug use which is pulled in from multiple sources and we think you will find it extremely valuable for staying up to date and educating those around you. www.recoveryhappens.com

Flesh-rotting 'krokodil' drug emerges in USA

Michael Winter, USA TODAY 9:08 p.m. EDT September 26, 2013

Two cases in Arizona are the first involving caustic, heroin-like IV drug that originated in Russia.

A powerful heroin-like drug that rots flesh and bone has made its first reported appearance in the United States, an Arizona health official says.

Known on the street as "krokodil," the caustic homemade opiate is made from over-the-counter codeine-based headache pills mixed with iodine, gasoline, paint thinner or alcohol. When it's injected, the concoction destroys a user's tissue, turning the skin scaly and green like a crocodile. Festering sores, abscesses and blood poisoning are common.

Frank LoVecchio, the co-medical director at the [Banner Good Samaritan Poison & Drug Information Center](#), [told](#) KPHO-TV that Arizona health officials have seen two cases during the past week.

"As far as I know, these are the first cases in the United States that are reported," he said. "So we're extremely frightened."

LoVecchio did not say where in the state the patients were located or provide details about their conditions.

The drug — chemically called [desomorphine](#) — emerged around 2002 in Siberia and the Russian Far East but has swept across the country in just the past three years, according to a *Time* magazine [investigation](#).

Krokodil became popular in Russia because heroin can be difficult to obtain and is expensive. Krokodil costs three times less, and the high is similar to heroin though much shorter, usually 90 minutes.

The average life expectancy among krokodil addicts in Russia is two to three years, according to *Time*, which called the narcotic "the most horrible drug in the world." Gangrene and amputations are common, and the toxic mix dissolves jawbones and teeth, much like the methamphetamine that Walter White cooks in *Breaking Bad*.

As with all intravenous drug addicts, krokodil users are susceptible to HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases, and have compromised immune systems.

One recovering Russian krokodil addict, Irina Pavlova, told *Time* in 2011 that she injected the drug almost daily for six years. She has a speech impediment and impaired motor skills because of the resulting brain damage.

Her brother was among the dozen or so addicts she shot up with. "Practically all of them are dead now," she said. "For some, it led to pneumonia, some got blood poisoning, some had an artery burst in their heart, some got meningitis, others simply rot."

A Russian woman using krokodil in June 2011 [told](#) *The Independent* that a fellow junkie refused to go to the hospital.

"Her flesh is falling off and she can hardly move anymore," she said.