

HARM REDUCTION IN HEROIN USE:

a fact sheet about **nutrition**



People often blame malnutrition on heroin use when malnutrition is actually often the cause of the “lifestyle” associated with being a drug user and economic hardship created by the addiction. Here are a few tips on maintaining nutrition while using heroin:

- ⑥ Protein shakes are important because they provide essential vitamins and minerals and require no time and energy to prepare. It may be more economical to buy protein powder and mix it with milk or soymilk.
- ⑥ You should eat regularly during heroin use even if experiencing nausea. Eat foods that are easy on your stomach, such as unbuttered toast, broth, ginger ale, rice, pasta, crackers.
- ⑥ Look into free food sources when your income is being depleted by the high cost of heroin. The Survival Center in Northampton offers free groceries and the Survival Center in Amherst offers a free lunch some weekdays. If you live in a rooming house, you may also qualify for Single Room Occupancy Outreach, in which case your SRO outreach worker will dispense free food from time to time and offer rides to the Survival Center and other food pantries. Also, it's worth looking into whether or not you qualify for food stamps.
- ⑥ Remember to include fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet. It's difficult to think about non-immediate essentials like maintaining variety and nutrition in your diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables are oftentimes cheaper than shelf groceries and the vitamins they contain will help to boost your immune system.
- ⑥ Anecdotal evidence reveals that heroin users often report more incidents of ulcers than the rest of the population. This is probably related to malnutrition and can be avoided simply by eating more.