

4. After injecting

- After taking the needle out of the vein, take a dry swab/clean paper tissue (not a finger, because dirty fingers or used cloths can easily pass germs) and with it put pressure on the injection site. It helps prevent the formation of bruises.
- Afterwards, do not wipe the injection site with an alcohol swab (it stops the blood from clotting and prolonged bleeding leads to more bruising, more infections, and slower healing) and do not lick it (saliva can cause serious infection).
- When the bleeding stops, it is helpful to use 'Vein Cream.' (Aloe Vera, Vitamin E, etc) for reducing swelling and promoting healing.
- And do not forget, it is necessary to rotate the sites and from time to time to give your veins a break. Smoke, snort or eat your drugs instead injecting.

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

ALWAYS USE CONDOMS

- Using condoms for vaginal sex protects you from HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections and prevents pregnancy.
- Using condoms for anal sex protects you from HIV and Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Using condoms for oral sex protects you from HIV and sexually transmitted infections that can be caught orally.

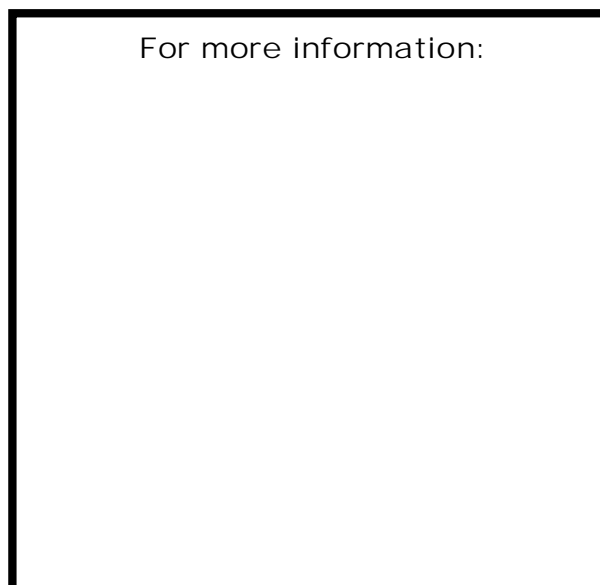
LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY

- If you have discharge, other symptoms or you are in pain go for a medical check up.
- Don't self prescribe; get a medical check up to ensure correct treatment.
- Always complete any course of treatment prescribed by a doctor, otherwise the infection may come back.
- Go for regular medical check ups or when you have a condom burst or unsafe sex.



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➔ It is safest not to use drugs, but if you use drugs there are ways to reduce the risks involved.

➔ If you are using drugs, being well informed about safer drug use, is very important!

There are different risks associated with drug use related to:

- the type of drug you use,
- the way you use drugs,
- the environment in which you use drugs.

In this material we will take a closer look only at - **how to reduce the risks related to the way drugs are used.**

The most risky way of drug using is injecting.

Swallowing, sniffing, smoking or inhaling drugs are safer than injecting, though still not without risks.

If we could make a hierarchy of safer means of drug use, starting with the safest way, it would look like this:

1. Do not use
2. Swallowing
3. Smoking
4. Inhaling
5. Sniffing
6. Injecting.



Swallowing, smoking or inhaling

Once you have swallowed, smoked or inhaled a drug, the effects can be delayed for up to one to two hours and may be stronger than you expected.

Sniffing

Has more risks:

- It is easier to overdose (than via swallowing or smoking);
- There is a risk of Hepatitis B and C and HIV via sharing of sniffing equipment.

TIPS FOR SAFER SNIFFING

- Always crush crystals/powder as finely as possible using two clean spoons. This allows for relatively good control and can produce a fine powder.
- Do not share straws or tubes for sniffing, as there is the risk of Hepatitis C transmission. Small amounts of blood can be passed between people using the same tube or straw.
- Bank notes are not advisable, as they are dirty and can also transfer blood as with straws or tubes.

Injecting

Is most risky because there is a greater chance of:

- Overdose;
- Infections like HIV, Hepatitis B and C and others through sharing injecting equipment;
- Abscesses;
- Blood clots (thromboses); blood poisoning (septicaemia) and gangrene.

TIPS FOR SAFER INJECTING

Overdose prevention

- Be sure about exactly what drug you are injecting.
- Be sure about the strength of your drug supply. Test your dope. If you have been clean for a while (even two weeks counts!), or using a new dealer, do a small shot first.
- Never inject alone, or in a place where you can not be found.
- You should know what to do if someone overdoses.

Infections prevention

1. Make sure your equipment is clean

- Use sterile needles and syringes only;
- Use your own spoon, filter and water (bottled water or water that has been boiled for at least 5 minutes)
- Do not share any of the equipment.

2. Before the injecting

- Wash your hands.
- Choose an injection site.
- Do not forget, it is necessary to rotate the injecting sites, because too much use of one vein will cause it to collapse.
- Clean the injection site with an alcohol wipe before injecting or at least with soap and water.

3. Injecting

- Find a comfortable position for you. Do not forget, it is less risky to use in company of your friends, than alone (especially in the case of overdose).
- Use a tourniquet to tie off the vein, because it can greatly ease access of your veins and reduce the amount of damage the needle causes.
- Clean site with an alcohol swab
- For minimal tissue damage you should put the syringe, at 45-degree angle, bevel up (sloped side up). Always inject in the direction of the flow of blood – towards your heart.
- Flag (draw plunger back until blood flows into needle), to ensure needle is in vein
- Untie tourniquet.
- Inject slowly.

Try to be straight while working in order to have more control over negotiations with the client.