

PREVENTING INJURY AND INFECTION

- **Use only new equipment** (cooker, syringe, cotton, water, etc.), and **do not share**.
- **If sharing drugs**, split the powder and prepare your own shot
- **Wash hands, use a clean surface, and disinfect your injection site beforehand**
- **Take your time and inject directly into the vein.** Skin popping/missing shots increases risk of abscesses
- Inject with the **syringe hole (bevel) pointed up and the syringe pointed to the heart** (in the direction of blood flow). to help prevent vein tearing
- **Open your tourniquet before removing the syringe** to prevent bruising/bleeding. This will also prevent tissue death in the event of a heavy nod/overdose

REDUCING RISK OF OVERDOSE AND OTHER ADVERSE EFFECTS

- Certain conditions like heart/circulatory issues can increase risk of medical emergency. **Get a medical check-up and take your prescribed medications** to manage preexisting conditions.
- Try to get 8 hours of **sleep**, drink a few cups of **water**, and **eat** a nutritious meal beforehand.
- **Use with a friend and take turns** so you can help if the other overdoses
- **Avoid slamming and try to spread out shots.** Inject a little and leave it in the vein, wait a few minutes, and then inject a little more

Street drugs are impure and can have dangerous cuts.

- **Purchase from someone you trust and can ask questions** about drug quality/effects
- **Test for fentanyl** with test strips (OnPoint NYC offers free test strips)

The strength of street drugs varies widely, which makes it difficult to determine your dose.

- **Sniff a test line** to gauge strength.
- You can also **take a test shot**, either by preparing a small dose first with a different syringe or injecting a small amount first then wait

SAFER INJECTING TOOLS

These tools are included in our safer injecting kit to help reduce the risk of injury and infection. Remember to use new tools each time!

SYRINGE:

Reusing syringes not only increases infection risk, but blunts the needle. This can make injection more difficult, cause injury, and increase risk of scarring. To help prevent reuse, 3 syringes are included

COOKER AND COTTON:

To prevent infection, do not share or reuse these! Used cookers and cotton collect bacteria. Our staff will be happy to give you extra

STERILE WATER:

When dissolving drugs, use sterile water to prevent infection.

BZK WIPES:

Use these to clean your hands before touching any equipment to help prevent infection.

ALCOHOL PADS:

Use these to wipe down your injection site beforehand. This will remove bacteria and dirt that can otherwise get pushed into your body!

GAUZE AND BAND-AID:

Your injection site is an open wound!. Apply these to protect it from dirt and bacteria after injecting

TOURNIQUET (NOT INCLUDED-- ASK IF YOU WANT!)

These help find and secure a vein. If you're having trouble using a tourniquet, ask one of our staff for help.



SAFER METH INJECTION

VISIT US!

Washington Heights Drop-in Center: 500 W 180th St
East Harlem Drop-in Center: 104-106 E 126th St

Step-by-Step: How to Inject Meth More Safely

1. Clean hands and surface for preparing shot

Wash your hands with warm water and soap or BZK wipes. Place a clean sheet of paper on a flat surface to help prevent contaminating equipment.

2. Crush desired amount of meth into powder

Chop drug up as finely as possible. A reliable way to do this is to place the drug inside a freshly folded piece of paper and use a hard object (like a lighter or phone) to press firmly along the paper's surface. Try to break down pieces to fine powder.

3. Pour powder into a fresh cooker

TIP: If you're unsure of the strength, pour half of what you normally do. You can always do the rest after!

4. Add sterile water to cooker

Uncap your fresh syringe and fill no more than half of the barrel with sterile water. Carefully add it to your cooker.

TIP: If you can't access sterile water, use cold running water or unopened bottled water.

5. Mix to dissolve powder

Use a syringe cap to mix the liquid until all of the powder is dissolved.

TIP: Do not use the plunger since it will collect unmixed particles, which will end up in your shot!

Still won't dissolve?: If the powder does not completely dissolve after mixing, add a small amount of Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and mix again to further break it down.

6. Add fresh cotton to cooker (to protect needle tip)

TIP: Cigarette filters contain harmful chemicals. If you don't have fresh cotton, use the head of a fresh Q-tip.

7. Draw mixture from cooker into syringe

Rest needle- with the hole (bevel) pointed down- gently on cotton. Draw mixture into your syringe by pulling back plunger, then carefully set it on your clean surface.

8. Find a usable vein

It's easier to find a vein if you're warm and hydrated. Drink lots of water and try doing push-ups or arm swings.

9. Prepare injection site

Use alcohol pads to clean site. Don't scrub. Allow the site to dry, but avoid touching/blowing on the site since that'll just make it dirty again!

10. Use tourniquet to secure vein (few inches above site)

Tie your tourniquet in a way that allows you to easily open it with one hand or your mouth. Remove tie if you experience throbbing, tingling, or start turning blue.

Need to make a tourniquet?: Stick to elastic materials like pantyhose, latex gloves, or condoms. Socks and neckties are also still safer than belts, shoelaces, and other stiff/thin materials.

11. Insert syringe and register

Insert needle bevel up in the direction of blood flow. Pull plunger back slightly to confirm you've hit a vein. Dark red blood should flow easily into the syringe. Stop if you feel a sharp pain or the blood is pink/foamy- this means you've hit an artery!

If you hit an artery or don't see blood: Open tourniquet and remove syringe. Add a bit of cold water to prevent clogging and repeat steps 7-11 using a new site and fresh syringe. DO NOT dig around- this can tear your vein!

12. Inject into the vein

Unsure you're in a vein? Pause and register again.

TIP: It's best to undo your tourniquet before injecting. Either way, always open it before removing the syringe!

Skin popping (subcutaneous): Try to avoid skin popping since meth is very corrosive and there is a very high risk of abscesses with this route!

13. Cover the site to prevent infection

Use a fresh band-aid- with or without gauze-- to cover the injection site.

14. Safely discard used supplies in sharps container

Throw out all used equipment (syringe, cooker, cotton, used alcohol pads) in a sharps container (available at harm reduction programs and medical facilities).

No sharps container?: Use a puncture resistant container (bleach or detergent bottle). Clearly label, "Contains Sharps." Do not flush syringes down the toilet since this can damage plumbing and end up on beaches!

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT SAFER INJECTION?

Email us your drug education questions at info@onpointnyc.org