

WHEN TO SEEK HELP



IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- FEVER
- NAUSEA OR VOMITING
- FAST PACED HEART BEAT
- DIFFICULTY BREATHING
- BODY SWELLING
- SWEATS & CHILLS
- TIREDDNESS YOU CAN'T SHAKE
- UNMANAGEABLE PAIN AT INJECTION SITE
- CONFUSION

WHILE SOME OF THESE SYMPTOMS CAN BE FROM DRUG USE, THESE CAN ALSO BE SIGNS OF A BLOOD INFECTION CALLED 'SEPSIS' WHICH CAN QUICKLY LEAD TO SEVERE COMPLICATIONS

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Apothicom. Sterifilt: Protect your veins. Retrieved from Sterifilt, presentation (apothicom.org)

National Harm Reduction Coalition. (2020). Getting Off Right: A Safety Manual for Injection Drug Users. Retrieved from front cover (4.0) (harmreduction.org)

Merchants Quay Ireland Homeless & Drug Services. (2021). Safer Injecting: Reducing the harm associated with injecting drug use. Retrieved from mqj_safer_injecting_guide.pdf (drugs.ie)

Sterifilt (2020). *Sterifilt Needles for Injection*. [Google Images]. www.totalaccessgroup.com/assets/images/hr-s-t-filt_sterifilt.jpg

Interior Health Peer Advisory Group

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If LifeGuard is unavailable to you: Get a friend to spot you on the phone <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbUwb-pszW4>



LIFEGUARD

DIGITAL HEALTH

Powered by **evan**

VEIN CARE

HOW TO SAVE YOUR VEINS WHEN INJECTING DRUGS

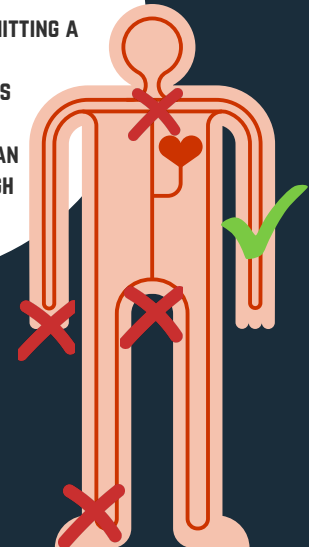


RISKY SITES

NECK: RISK OF HITTING AN ARTERY OR DEVELOPING A BLOOD CLOT WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A STROKE

LEGS, FEET, WRISTS: RISK OF HITTING A NERVE, DEVELOPING A BLOOD CLOT OR ABSCESS

GROIN: RISK OF HITTING AN ARTERY OR NERVE & HIGH GERM ZONE



PREPARING TO USE

- Try to be in a quiet well lit space so you can see & not rushed for time
- Have a friend present if possible
- Have the "LifeGuard" app handy if you have cell service or data to use
- **ALWAYS** use new supplies
- Cleanse the injection site & your hands- or wear gloves
- Have a sharps container
- Learn to self-inject & inject with both hands

CHOOSING YOUR SITE

- Try to pick a lower vein in your arm & move up when you need
- Rotate sites each time you use to keep the veins healthy

HOW TO MAKE THAT VEIN POP



- **HOLD DOWN A WARM COMPRESS**
- **PUMP THAT FIST**
- **SLAP OR FLICK IT**
- **KEEP HYDRATED**
- **USE A QUICK-RELEASE ELASTIC TOURNIQUET**

KNOW YOUR WORKS

- Use citric acid and avoid using lemon juice or vinegar to reduce complications
- Use sterile water or cooled boiled tap water to avoid infections
- Pick filters: Try a Steri-Filt single use filter that eliminates almost all impurities OR use dental cotton
- **AVOID** cigarette filters & cotton balls to keep fibreglass out of your veins



INJECTING

- Use smallest needle to avoid damaging veins
- Insert needle with bevel up
- Inject slowly
- Inject towards the heart
- Remove needle quickly to avoid collapsing the vein & apply pressure

AVOID SHOOTING INTO A PULSE: THIS IS AN ARTERY & WILL RESULT IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

SIGNS OF VEIN DAMAGE & INFECTION



- Pain or redness at injection site
- Swelling at injection site: could be an abscess
- Green/ yellow oozing from injection site
- Red streaking at injection site



EXTRA VEIN TIPS

MAKE SURE PILLS ARE CRUSHED COMPLETELY & TRY USE A STERI-FILT

MANY PILLS HAVE COATINGS ON THEM SO THEY WONT DISSOLVE

IF YOUR HAVING DIFFICULTY HITTING THE VEIN SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM A HARM REDUCTION RESOURCE

MISSED HITS CAN INCREASE RISK FOR INFECTION OR ABSCESS