



# Vein Care

When involved in IV drug activity it is very important to look after your health and well being. A part of this is vein care. You must respect your body and take care of it.

This pamphlet has been created to educate and assist individuals about the resources and support services available to provide some facts necessary to make informed decisions about their health and assist them in taking care of their veins.

## Finding a Good Vein -

**A good vein is one that feels like a small rubber tube under a sheet.**

## If You Can't Find A Good Vein Try -

- Clenching and relaxing your fist.
- Gently rub the skin over the vein.
- Gently slap the skin over the vein.
- Soak your arm in warm water.
- Wrap the area in a towel soaked with warm water.
- Squeeze your bicep with your hand.
- Better to spend time finding a good vein rather than dig around to find one.
- **Never inject into an artery.**
- If you hit an artery the plunger is forced back by the pressure of blood or when you pull back the blood is frothy. Hitting an artery can also be very painful.

**If you use a belt as a tourniquet, make sure that you don't pull so tight that you stop the blood flow to your arm.**

## Basic Safety!

- Choose a safe and familiar place to use drugs. Be sure you trust the people you use with.
- Never share drug equipment.
- Ask questions and know the drugs that you are using and your dealer.
- Understand the risk with mixing different drugs together. Some mixtures can be fatal.
- When using drugs from a new or unknown dealer or after a prolonged time of not using, do half your regular dose to be on the safe side.
- Filtering your drug before injecting will remove any chunks that can damage veins or your lungs.
- Always use a sharp needle and insert at a slight angle with the bevel up to reduce damage to veins.
- **Never use drugs alone! You can't call 911 if you are unconscious!**

**AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)** is caused by the virus called HIV (Human immunodeficiency Virus). HIV attacks your immune system, reducing your ability to fight infections. As a PHA (Person who has AIDS), you are not alone. Roughly 65,000 Canadians are presently living with HIV/AIDS. There is no cure yet, but there are many medications that can help you lead a very productive life. This pamphlet has been created to assist you in educating yourself about the resources and support services available to help you get the facts necessary to make informed decisions about your health.

**Hepatitis C** is a virus and enters the body through blood contact. The virus attacks the liver and decreases overall liver function. The liver is responsible for over 500 functions in the body. Over many years the virus scars the liver decreasing it's ability to work properly. Many people do not know they have Hepatitis C because there are no symptoms for many years.

**Some Symptoms of Hep C:** tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea and diarrhea, In rare cases jaundice ( a yellowing of the skin and eyes ) will appear.

Drinking alcohol and long term use of medications that are known to be toxic to the body can make liver damage worse.

# Terms you need to know!

**Skin Popping**– injecting of drugs between your skin & fat layers. This will cause a bubble to appear that can sometimes be very painful

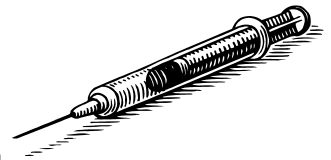
**Rigs**– Needles or spoons that you use.

**Cooking**– Heating up the spoon from below with a lighter or match. The heat will help dissolve the drugs. Cooking will not make things sterile but will increase your odds against infection.

**Red Flag**– When you see blood go into the needle after hitting a vein, it tells you that it is ok to shoot.

## A Safe Way To Inject -

- Clean the site with alcohol
- Position the limb so that you can inject without moving the limb
- Insert the needle up into the skin at a 45 degree angle and then up into the vein
- Pull back the plunger - and if it pulls blood into the syringe, you have struck a vein
- Remove any tourniquets inject slowly
- Remove the needle as soon as you have finished injecting
- Apply pressure to the site to help recovery for the next time



## More Information...

Northern Healthy Connections Society  
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Office 895-0931  
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