



**DCengage**  
reducingharm  
enhancingcare

# reducing harm WHEN USING DRUGS

## WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

- » Refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to minimize negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug law.
- » Grounded in **justice** and **human rights** — it focuses on positive change and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that they stop using drugs as a precondition.
- » Offers a set of practical strategies that **reduce negative consequences of drug use**, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence.



## GOALS OF HARM REDUCTION

- » Keep people alive and encourage positive change in their lives.
- » Reduce the harm of drug laws and policy.
- » Offer options to help people manage their drug use and achieve their individual goals.



## GENERAL HARM REDUCTION TIPS FOR DRUG USE

- » **DO NOT USE ALONE.**
- » Test substances for fentanyl.
- » Avoid mixing drugs.
- » Stay hydrated.
- » **ALWAYS** carry Naloxone.

HealthHIV **HIPS**

a resource created by HealthHIV in consultation with HIPS for the DC Engage program

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# SAFER INJECTING

## AVOID HEAD AND NECK

Overdosing is more likely when you shoot up near areas closest to the heart and brain. Abscesses are more dangerous here, too.



## ARMS

Use surface veins in arms if they are in good shape. Rotate sites regularly.

## AVOID THE WRISTS

Nerves, veins, and arteries are all close together in the wrists. Shooting up here is dangerous.



## AVOID THE GROIN AREA

There are major arteries here — if you hit one, you could lose a leg or die. Never inject into or around the genitals.



## HANDS

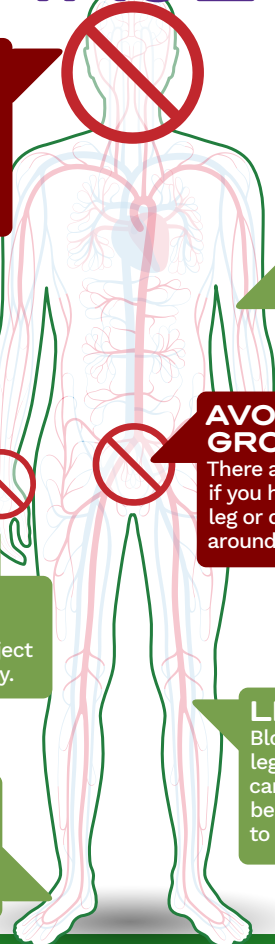
The veins on the back of the hands are sensitive. If you inject here, it will hurt! Inject slowly.

## FEET

The veins on the top of the feet are sensitive. If you inject here, it will hurt! Inject slowly.

## LEGS

Blood flows slowly to the legs, so inject slowly. Be careful not to hit the artery behind the knee. It is easier to get blood clots here.



## SAFER INJECTING TIPS

- » ALWAYS use a clean needle, as well as the safest injection supplies available (tourniquets, sterile water, clean cookers, etc.).
- » Clean the injection area with an alcohol prep pad.
- » Avoid injecting prescription pills (time release agents can damage veins).
- » Avoid injecting into neck, wrists, groin area, or back of knees.
- » ALWAYS rotate injection sites.

## SAFER SNORTING TIPS

- » Use a clean straw instead of a dollar bill.
- » Do NOT share straws.
- » Post-It notes make excellent single-use (disposable) straws.
- » Clean and sanitize the surface where it is being cut, and the card/razor you are cutting with.
- » Flush nasal cavity with warm water.

## SAFER SMOKING TIPS

- » Use a sterilized pipe.
- » Add a mouthpiece to the pipe to help prevent burns.
- » Use alcohol prep pads to sterilize if sharing pipes between users.
- » If the smoking individual has asthma, keep an inhaler nearby.

## LOCAL HARM REDUCTION ORGANIZATIONS

### HIPS (202) 232-8150

Drop-in center, needle exchange, condom distribution, testing, suboxone, education

### BREAD FOR THE CITY (202) 265-2400

Food, clothing, medical care, legal counsel, advocacy, needle exchange

### FAMILY AND MEDICAL COUNSELING SERVICE, INC. (202) 889-7900

Medical care, substance abuse counseling, needle exchange, therapy, HIV testing and treatment

FOR PLACES CARRYING NARCAN/NALOXONE, VISIT  
<https://dchealth.dc.gov/NarcanDC>

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