

WHO-ASSIST Risks of Injecting Card – Information (for Clients)

Using substances by injection increases the risk of harm from substance use. This harm can come from:

- **The substance**
 - If you inject any drug you are more likely to become dependent.
 - If you inject amphetamines or cocaine you are more likely to experience psychosis.
 - If you inject heroin or other sedatives you are more likely to overdose.
- **The injecting behaviour**
 - If you inject you may damage your skin and veins and get infections.
 - You may cause scars, bruises, swelling, abscesses and ulcers.
 - Your veins might collapse.
 - If you inject into the neck you can cause a stroke.
- **Sharing of injecting equipment**
 - If you share injecting equipment (needles & syringes, spoons, filters, etc.) you are more likely to spread blood borne viruses like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

*****It is safer not to inject*****

If you do inject:

- always use clean equipment (e.g. needles & syringes, spoons, filters, etc.)
- always use a new needle and syringe for every hit
- don't share equipment with other people
- clean the preparation area, your hands and the injection site
- use a different injecting site each time
- inject slowly
- put your used needle and syringe in a hard container and dispose of it safely
- have regular checks by a doctor for blood borne viruses

If you use stimulant drugs like amphetamines or cocaine the following tips will help you reduce your risk of psychosis.

- avoid injecting and smoking
- avoid using on a daily basis

If you use depressant drugs like heroin the following tips will help you reduce your risk of overdose.

- avoid using other drugs, especially sedatives or alcohol, on the same day
- use a small amount and always have a trial "taste" of a new batch
- have someone with you when you are using
- avoid injecting in places where no-one can get to you if you do overdose
- know the telephone numbers of the ambulance service

Clean Needle Program

The Clean Needle Program can provide you with a range of free services including sterile injecting equipment, disposal equipment, education and information about safer injecting and referral to drug treatment, health and social services.

Contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) on 1800 250 015 for the location of your nearest Clean Needle Program.