

Handy Hints for Blood awareness

Stock up on equipment so you don't run out. 📌 Clean your spoon before mixing up (swab once in one direction only). 📌 If you can't wash your hands use plenty of new swabs to clean them, particularly on the parts of your fingers and hands that will come in contact with any injecting materials. 📌 Stop the flow of blood after injecting with clean cotton wool tissues or clean toilet paper. 📌 **Avoid spraying blood when rinsing / cleaning your syringe, so you don't spread blood around.** 📌 If you think you might have to reuse your own syringe rinse it immediately in clean cold tap water. This will remove most of the blood and help reduce the likelihood of HIV and hepatitis C transmission if someone accidentally sticks themselves with it. Recap and mark your syringe and store in a safe place. Dispose of the water you used to rinse your syringe down the sink. 📌 Be aware of blood on sleeves and clothes, if you get blood on your clothes or tourniquets etc, wash them immediately. 📌 Don't reuse swabs, filters or open water ampoules as they will be contaminated once opened. Dispose of them in you disposal bin or double bag them and put them out with or in your household rubbish.

Why use soap? 📌 Soap assists in removing bacteria through the rubbing and then the running water washes it away. It doesn't matter which kind of soap you use, but for hygiene reasons, liquid soap is better than bar soap. Drying your hands after washing them further reduces the number of microorganisms; paper towels are best because they are slightly abrasive and can rub away even more bacteria. 📌

Why use swabs? 📌 The alcohol kills the bacteria as it evaporates from your skin or spoon. Which is why you shouldn't blow on it to dry it faster, you're just putting new germs on the area (from your mouth). You use swabs once in one direction otherwise you're just moving the dirt and bacteria around. 📌 **Why use water from the cold tap?** 📌 Water that is too hot or too cold for that matter causes the blood to congeal and stick inside the syringe where it can shed virus particles into your mix.

Drug User organisations around Australia

ACT | CAHMA

ph.: (02) 6279 1670
email: cahma@aivl.org.au
web: www.aivl.org.au
(in "member orgs" section)

Northern Territory | NAP

ph.: (08) 8941 9921
email: hq@napnt.org
web: www.napnt.org

South Australia | SAVIVE

ph.: (08) 8334 1699
email: manager@
savive.org.au

Victoria | Harm Reduction Victoria

ph.: (03) 9329 1500
email: vivaid@vivaid.org.au
web: www.vivaid.org.au

New South Wales | NUAA

ph.: (02) 8354 7300
or 1800 644 413
email: admin@nuaa.org.au
web: www.nuaa.org.au

Queensland | QUIHN

ph.: (07) 3620 8111
email: quihn@quihn.org.au
web: www.quihn.org

Tasmania | TASCARD

ph.: (03) 6234 1242
email: mail@
tascahd.org.au
web: www.tascahd.org.au

Western Australia | WASUA

ph.: (08) 9321 2877
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a Guide to Cleaning Used Syringes

**When there is no
other way**

This Guide to Cleaning Used Syringes has been developed by The Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL) with input from drug users and other specialists around Australia, to provide the most effective way currently available to clean used equipment.

The best way to avoid contracting hepatitis C and other blood borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis B is not to inject.

If you choose to inject,

below is a guide from best to worst options:

1 Use sterile injecting equipment every time you inject including:



- sterile syringes, sterile water,
- new swabs, clean spoons,
- clean tourniquets, clean filters,
- and clean your injecting space and wash your hands.

If you can't get a sterile syringe you could:

- choose to wait until you can get a new syringe,
- try using your drug another way
e.g. smoking, snorting, swallowing, or shafting (up your bum),
- clean a syringe that only you have used before, or
- as a very last resort...
clean a syringe that someone else has used.

Guide to cleaning used syringes including your own

Equipment

Start with a clean safe space and an area with a safe place to dispose of the used fluids such as a sink, drain or toilet. You will need three separate containers: **A. One container filled with clean cold tap water.** If available add a little detergent as this helps loosen the blood particles so they are easier to rinse away. Use water from the cold tap. If the water is too hot or too cold it can cause any blood in the syringe to congeal and stick inside the syringe where it can shed microscopic particles/virus into your mix. **B. One container filled with full strength bleach**



(at least 5.25% sodium hypochlorite and check the use by date) for soaking/bleaching your syringe. **C. One container filled with clean, cold tap water** for rinsing the bleach from your syringe. Wash your hands in warm soapy water before you start.

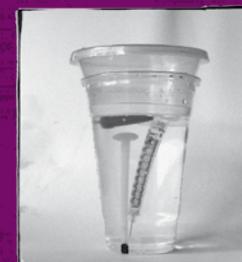
Cleaning Process

Remember there are three separate steps to this process: rinsing, bleaching and flushing. They all have to be done for the right amount of time in the right order.

A. Rinsing: Draw up detergent water or plain water from the first container (A) and fill up the syringe. **Squirt the water into your sink.** Repeat at least 5 times. Empty the container of used water down your sink.



B. Bleaching: Take the syringe apart and put it in the second container (B), make sure it is completely covered by bleach (don't forget the cap). You may have to put something on top to hold it under the bleach. **Soak for at least two minutes.** If you can't soak it, draw the bleach up into the syringe and shake it for at least 30 seconds. Put the cap on to prevent bleach getting on clothes or in eyes. **Count slowly** to make sure the bleach has enough contact time with any virus present. Counting "one thousand two thousand"... up to "thirty thousand" is a good way to measure, try not to rush. **Squirt this bleach into sink.** Repeat at least once. Discard used bleach from container down the sink.



C. Flushing: Draw up fresh water from the third container (C). This should be the only filled container left. **Squirt the water out into the sink.** Give the syringe a shake while flushing. Repeat this process at least six times. Don't forget to rinse the cap.



Why use detergent in the rinsing process? Detergent helps clean any residual blood or mix out of the syringe more effectively than just water alone; it helps bind the blood together with the detergent particles and becomes easier to wash out. **Why Bleach?** Other methods of trying to clean used syringes have been researched e.g. boiling, microwaving, and rinsing with alcohol swabs. None of these have been shown to be helpful. Boiling destroys your syringe, it melts, and you can't microwave metal and the process is not effective anyway. Bleach is the best and only real option we have at the present.

Injecting is the single greatest risk factor for contracting hepatitis C. You cannot entirely eliminate the risk of hepatitis C transmission from used syringes. In addition to the risk of contracting hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV by injecting with used syringes, there is an increased risk of having a dirty hit, getting an abscess and inflicting more damage on your veins. Even if you have hepatitis C, you can contract another strain of the virus, which adds to the stress on your liver.