10 Tips for Safer Use
Get Help and Support to Stop Using Drugs

Call 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or 311 Anytime Day or Night
10 Tips for Safer Use

1. Prevent Overdose
2. Treat Overdose
3. Don’t Share
4. Use New Syringes
5. Prepare Drugs Carefully
6. Take Care of Your Veins
7. Know Your HIV Status
8. Get Tested and Treated for Hepatitis
9. Get Help for Depression
10. Ask for Help to Stop Using
Prevent Overdose

• **Use with someone else.** If you’re alone and something goes wrong, no one can help.

• **Know your tolerance.** If you haven’t used for awhile, you are more likely to overdose. Use less than usual.

• **Don’t mix drugs.** Combining heroin or painkillers with benzos, alcohol, or cocaine, increases overdose risk.
RECOGNIZE!
• Overdose Symptoms: little or no breathing; lips turning blue.

ACT!
• Call 911 and say “My friend is not breathing. It’s a medical emergency.”
• Do rescue breathing (mouth-to-mouth). Tilt head back, pinch nose, and give 1 breath every 5 seconds. Use the disposable mask in your OD rescue kit. Continue until the person is breathing.
• Give Narcan (naloxone). Use the Narcan in your OD rescue kit. It works for up to 2 hours.
  • Shoot injectable Narcan into the upper arm or thigh...OR...
  • If you have sprayable Narcan, use half in one nostril, and half in the other.
• Lay the person on his or her side. The recovery position prevents the person from choking.

Get an OD rescue kit from your syringe exchange program. Call 1-800 LifeNet or 311 for more information.
Tip # 3

Don’t Share

- Protect yourself and others. Don’t share syringes or equipment.
- Use a new syringe, cooker, cotton, tie, and other supplies every time.
- Inject yourself. If someone helps you, make sure the person uses a new syringe.
- Throw away “rinse” or old cottons. Reusing them is dangerous.
- Never share a needle. If you have to reuse one, clean it with bleach and water.
Where to get them:
• Get free syringes and equipment from a syringe exchange program.
• Buy them at a drug store (ask the pharmacist).

How to get rid of them:
• Put used syringes and equipment in “sharps” containers from your syringe exchange program.
• Until you get a “sharps” container, put used syringes in a thick plastic container, such as a laundry soap bottle. Label it hazardous waste.
• Drop off used syringes at a hospital or clinic (they have to take them).

Call 1-800 LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or 311 to find a syringe exchange program.
Tip #5

Prepare Drugs Carefully

• Wash your hands with soap and water or hand wipes before you start.

• Make a clean “placemat” from a newspaper.

• Use fresh tap water or sterile water tubes (from your syringe exchange program).

• Draw up the water from a clean container.

• Use a new cooker every time. Don’t touch the inside!

• Drop the cotton directly into the cooker. Don’t touch it!

• Wipe the injection site with alcohol and allow the area to dry.

• Use a clean sterile syringe, even to split drugs.
Take Care of Your Veins

- Shoot correctly to avoid infection and collapsed veins.
- Don’t blunt your needle by poking a hole in your sterile water container.
- Warm your body (jump up and down) to show your veins.
- Find the vein before you try to inject. Tie off to make your veins visible.
- Don’t “dig” for veins. If you don’t “register,” pull out and try again.
- Don’t always inject in the same spot.
- Only “boot” once or twice in one shot.
Know Your HIV Status

• Everyone who has ever injected drugs should be tested for HIV.

• Re-test every 6 months if you are still injecting drugs.

• Free rapid HIV tests – results in less than an hour – are available at STD clinics. Call 311 for locations.

• If you have HIV, you can get treatment to feel better and live longer.

• You deserve good medical care, regardless of your drug history. Ask your counselor, or call 311, for help to get a doctor.
If you have ever injected drugs, you are at risk for hepatitis. See your doctor.

Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B. There is no vaccination for hepatitis C.

Tests and vaccinations are available free at STD clinics, or at your syringe exchange program.

Most people who inject drugs have been exposed to hepatitis C. Talk to your provider to understand your status.

Hepatitis can be treated. Talk to your doctor or call 311 for a referral.

If you have hepatitis B or C...

• You should not drink alcohol (it speeds up liver damage).

• Some pain relievers, including acetaminophen (Tylenol), and some herbal remedies can also hurt your liver. Talk to your doctor before using any medicine.
Tip #9

Get Help for Depression

- Drug use and depression often go hand in hand.
- Depression can make it much tougher to deal with drug use, and can make it harder to deal with other illnesses, including hepatitis.
- No one should have to live with depression.
- Many treatments are available, including medication and counseling.
- For help, talk to your counselor, call 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638), or call 311 and ask for LifeNet.
Find a drug treatment program. Call 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or 311 for information and referral.

You can get replacement therapy for heroin and other opiate addiction:

- Buprenorphine is a new prescription medication that requires only monthly doctor visits.

- Methadone is available through many licensed programs.

Try Narcotics Anonymous and other 12-Step programs.

Ask your syringe exchange program about treatment choices.

Options Are Available
YOU CAN GET HELP AND SUPPORT To Stop Using Drugs
Emergency Instructions
Overdose

• CALL 911 AND SAY “MY FRIEND IS NOT BREATHING.”

• DO RESCUE BREATHING (MOUTH-TO-MOUTH) IF YOU CAN.

• GIVE NARCAN IF YOU HAVE IT.

• LAY THE PERSON ON HIS OR HER SIDE.
If You Use Drugs...

• Plan Ahead
• Stay Safe
• Stay Alive

For Help and Support to Stop
Or for More Information
Call 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or 311
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