

TIP
TAKE
CHARGE
TAKE
CARE

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**



Tip#

1

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.





Tip#

2

Treat Overdose

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.





Tip#

4

Use New Syringes

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.

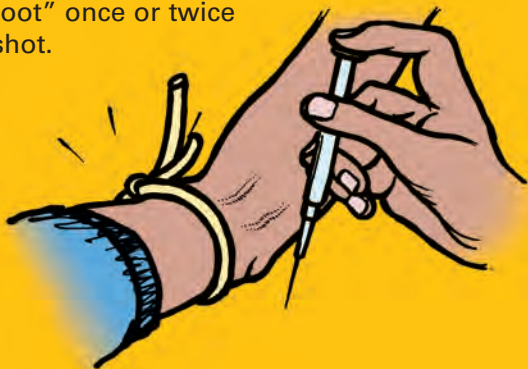




Tip# 6

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.



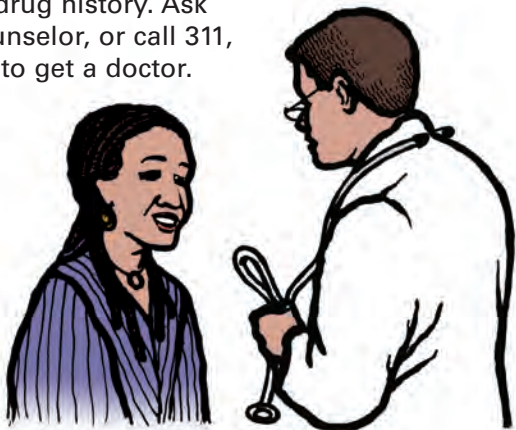


Tip#

7

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.





Tip#

8

Get Tested and Treated for Hepatitis

- 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.





Tip#

10

Ask for Help to Stop Using

- 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

Anytime Day or Night