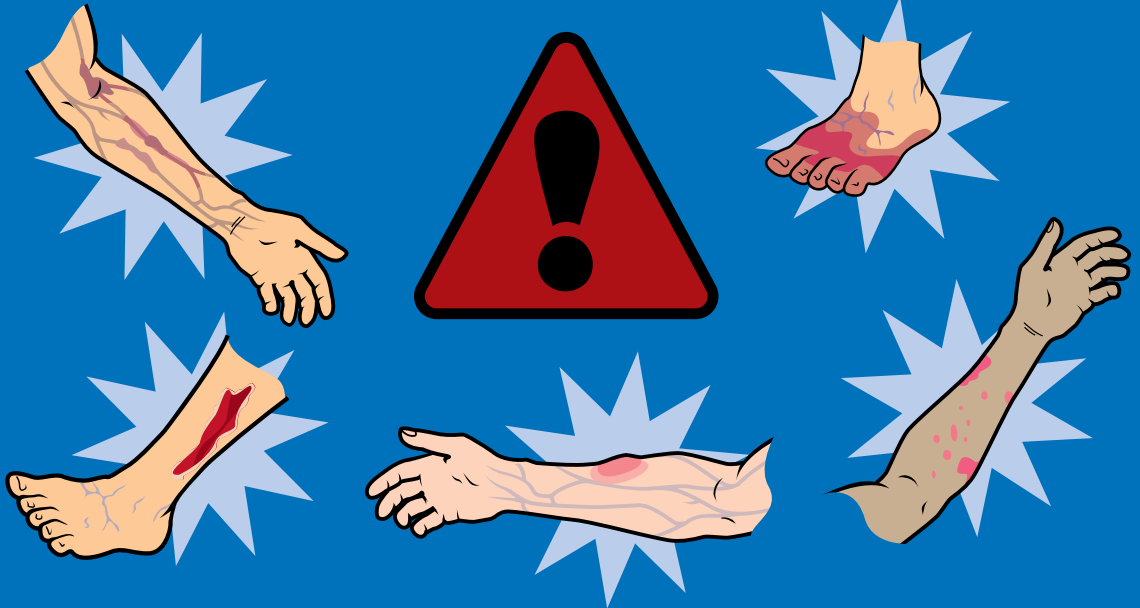
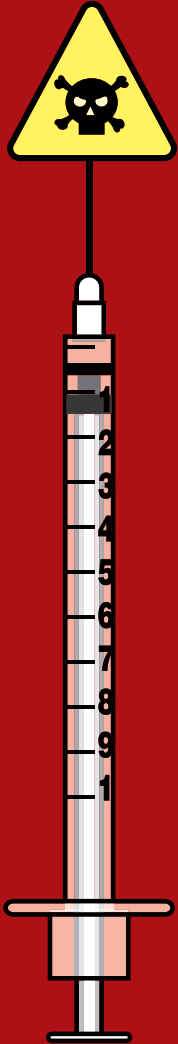


# WHEN THINGS

# GO WRONG



**Injecting problems & how to cope**



# What are Veins?

You have veins all over your body.  
They carry blood from your limbs  
and organs back to the heart.

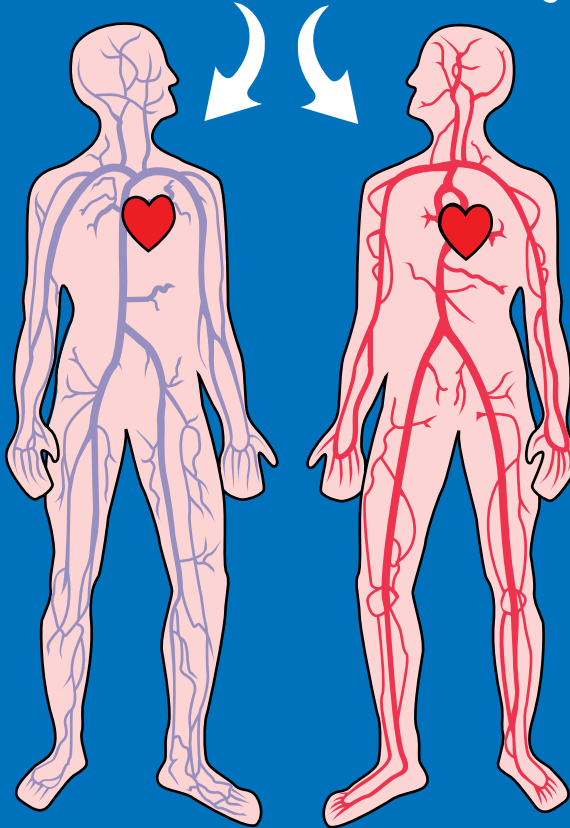
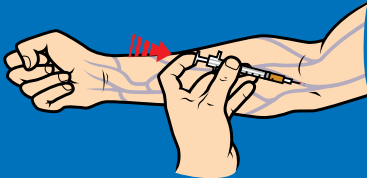


Veins are blue and  
have no pulse

Veins are filled  
with dark red  
blood



Drugs can be injected  
into some veins



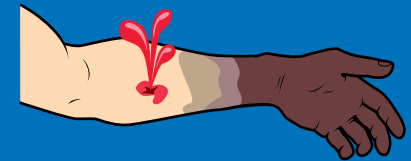
# What are Arteries?

You have arteries all over your body.  
They feed blood from the heart to your  
limbs and organs



Arteries have a pulse

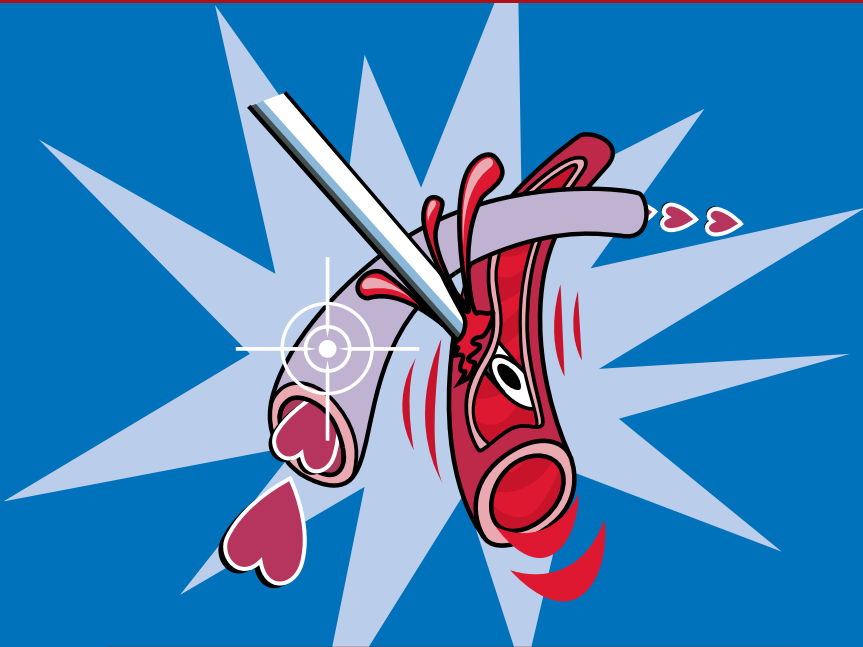
Arteries are filled  
with bright red,  
pinkish blood



If you hit an artery, the  
part of your body it fed  
with blood could turn  
black and die

**NEVER inject into an artery!**

# ARTERIES

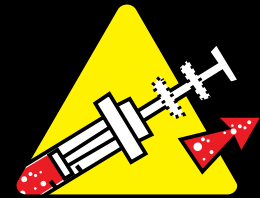


**If you miss a vein and hit an artery you can cause a lot of problems. You need to stop the bleeding and then get some help.**

## Warning Signs



**Pain when you inject**



**Bright red blood that may push back the plunger**



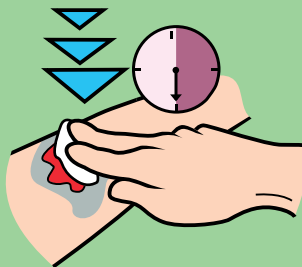
**Bleeding that may be hard to stop**



# ARTERIES

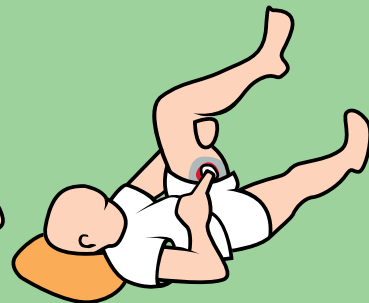
**Do**

**1**



Slide the needle out and apply pressure for 15-30 minutes to stop the bleeding. Use a clean paper tissue or sanitary towel.

**2**



Raising the affected area and lying down will help to stop the bleeding.

**3**



If the bleeding won't stop, call for an ambulance.

**4**



Even if you stop the bleeding, it's best to get yourself checked out by a doctor as soon as you can.

# Quick Guide

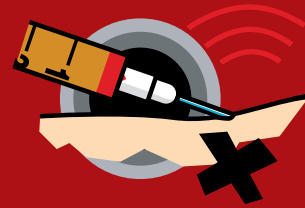
**Apply pressure**

**Raise the affected area and lie down**

**Call 112 if the bleeding won't stop**

**See a doctor event if the bleeding does stop**

# Don't



**DON'T inject if you see bright red blood or can feel a pulse.**

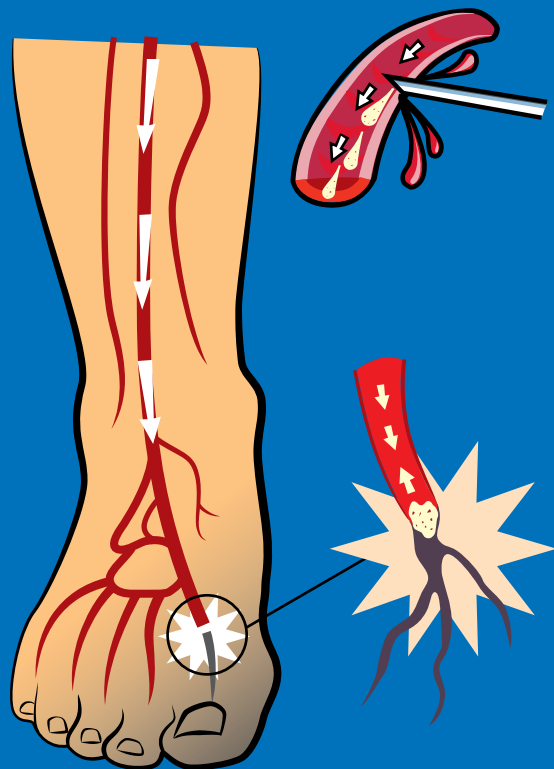
**If you hit an artery DON'T leave it to get better on its own - go see a doctor or ask at your needle exchange.**



**If you don't act fast you could lose fingers, toes or a limb. You could even bleed to death.**

# Artery blockages

**A blocked artery is bad news...**



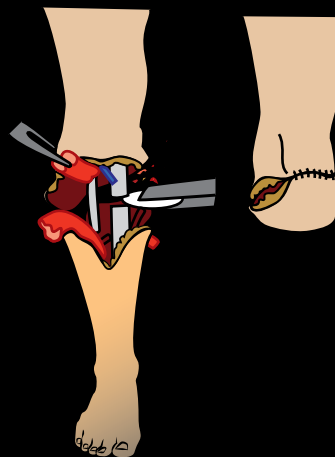
**Drug particles or blood clots can travel down the leg and block smaller arteries, starving parts of your leg or foot of blood.**

**An artery blockage means difficult and complicated surgery.**

**Signs of a blockage are discolouration, ulcers, pain and swelling. If you think you may have a problem, get to a doctor as soon as you can.**

## Gangrene

**A bad blockage can cause gangrene which spreads quickly. Gangrene is where parts of your body die and start to rot. Once gangrene has set in, amputation is usually the only option.**



**For example, injection into the artery of the wrist may cause blisters, blackening of fingers and eventually gangrene, after which fingers or the whole hand has to be amputated.**



**NEVER INJECT INTO AN ARTERY!**

# Avoiding Artery Damage

1

## Watch the Syringe

Gently draw back the plunger to check the needle is in a vein - a little **DARK** red blood should trickle into the syringe.



If you see **BRIGHT** red or pink blood pushing its way into the syringe you have hit an artery. **DO NOT INJECT.** Remove the needle and apply pressure.

2

## Don't inject Tablets

Injecting crushed tablets (such as Temazepam, Cyclizine or Diconal) can cause severe damage. If you injected tablets into an artery you'd be in a lot of trouble.



3

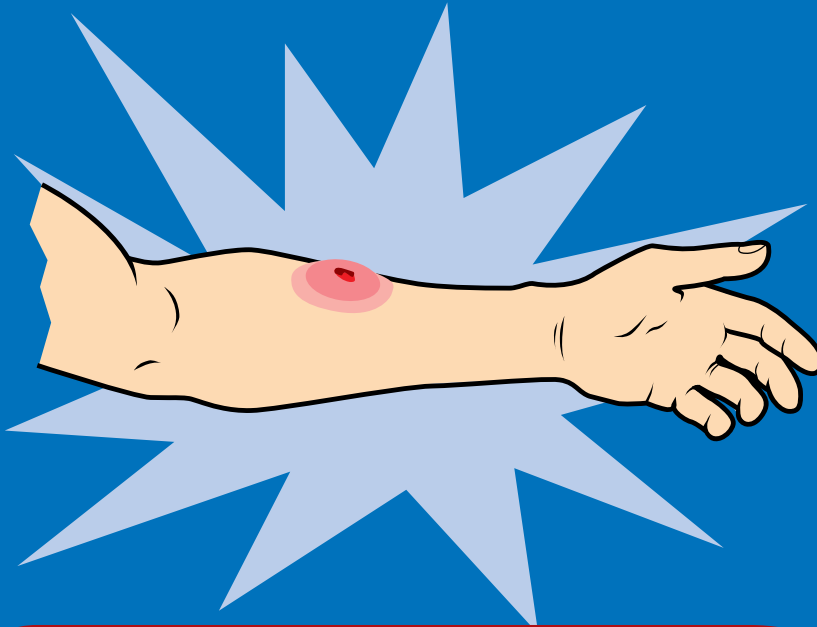
## Don't Go in the Groin

Injecting in the groin can be extremely dangerous. The vein in your groin is very close to your femoral artery. If you hit the femoral artery you could bleed to death or lose your leg. Going in the groin should be a last resort.



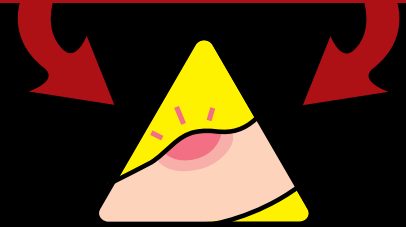


# ABSCESSES



**An abscess is an infected lump, filled with pus, under your skin. They can be serious and need to be treated by a doctor.**

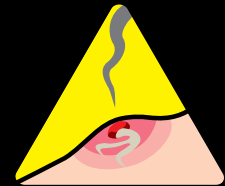
## Warning Signs



**Swelling and redness  
(if you have pale skin)**



**Skin feels hot  
and/or tender**



**Pus discharge and  
a bad smell**



# ABSCESSSES

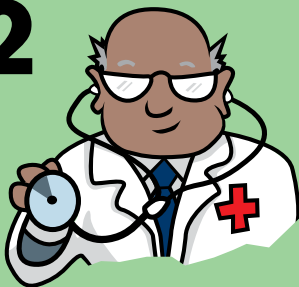


1



There's only one way to deal with an abscess: get to a doctor or ask for advice at your needle exchange.

2



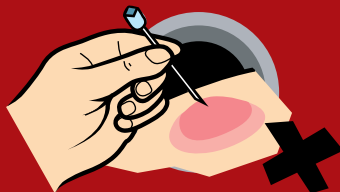
If you get treatment early enough, your doctor should be able to sort out the problem very easily.

3



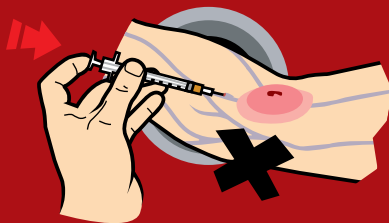
Your doctor can give you antibiotics to clear the infection or open the abscess to remove the pus.

# Don't



**DON'T** try to lance an abscess yourself. You may spread the infection and cause problems.

**DON'T** try to inject near a lump. Give that area a rest and use another site.



**DON'T** leave an abscess to get better on its own. It's just as likely to get a lot worse. Get to a doctor or ask for help at your needle exchange

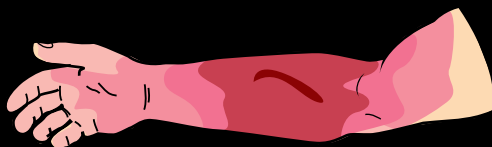


## Quick Guide

**Check the lump**

**Stop injecting in that area**

**Get to a doctor or ask at your needle exchange**



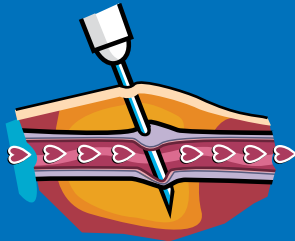
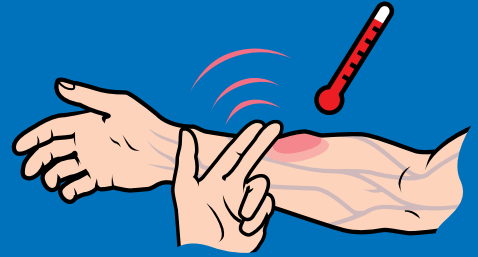
**If you don't get treatment quickly, infections like abscesses and cellulitis can cause very serious problems and illness.**



# LUMPS

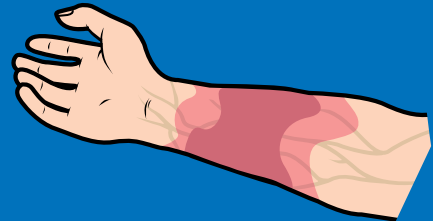
## Injecting Users Often Get Lumps Some Are Worse Than Others

Use the back of your fingers to feel around the lump. If it feels sore or warmer than the surrounding skin then it's probably infected and you need to see a doctor urgently.



Missed hits often leave a lump. These usually vanish after a day or two. Give that area a rest and keep an eye on it. If it's gets worse - or doesn't go away - get to the doctor.

A spreading, painful and swollen area could be cellulitis. This can be serious and you should get to a doctor straight away.



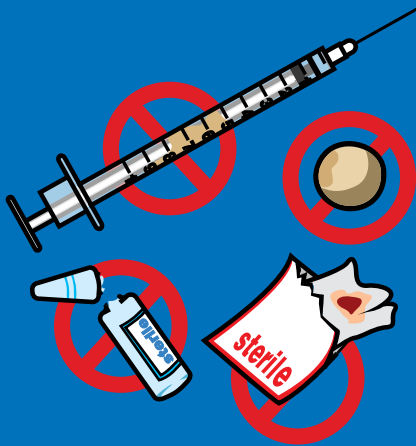
**If in doubt, ask at your needle exchange.**

# Avoiding Problems

1

## Don't Share or Reuse

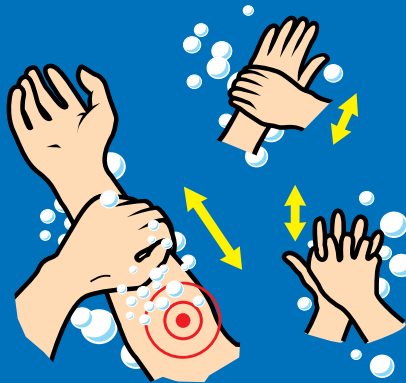
Used syringes, filters, swabs and water all carry bacteria that can cause infections and "dirty hits". Use them **ONCE** the discard. Never share **ANYTHING** you use to inject!



2

## Stay Clean

Wash your hands and the place you are going to inject. Use hot water and soap.

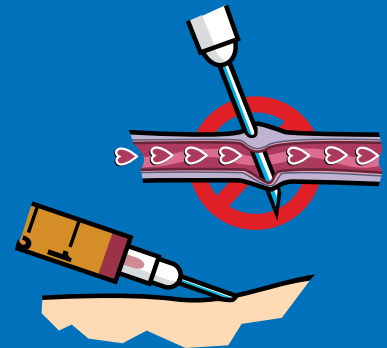


If you don't have soap and water a swab is better than nothing at all.

3

## Watch Your Aim

Missed hits can cause lumps and abscesses. Make sure the needle is properly in a vein before you inject.



Don't keep hitting the same spot. Rotate sites and give your veins a chance to heal.

# **“DIRTY” HITS**

## **Warning Signs**



**“Dirty hits” are caused by injecting bacteria into the blood. They can make you feel very ill but aren’t dangerous if you sit it out and don’t re-inject.**



**Feeling very ill just  
after injecting**



**Shivering,  
sweating and  
a headache**

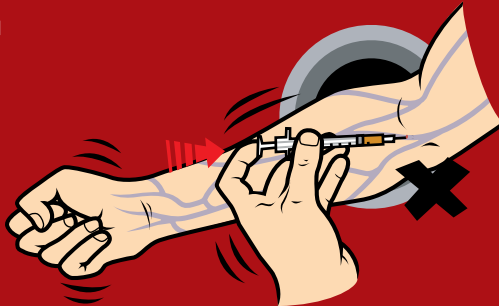
# Do



A “bad hit” usually wears off after a few hours so it’s probably best to just sit it out.

If you don’t start to feel better after a few hours or start to feel worse, get to a doctor.

# Don't



However tempting it is, **DON'T** re-inject or take more drugs. The chances of overdosing are very high.

## Quick Guide

**DON'T** re-inject

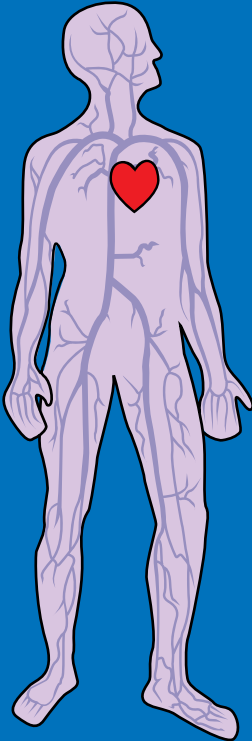
**Make yourself comfortable and sit it out**

**If you don't start to feel better after a few hours (or start to feel worse) get to a doctor**

# Anatomy lesson

## Veins

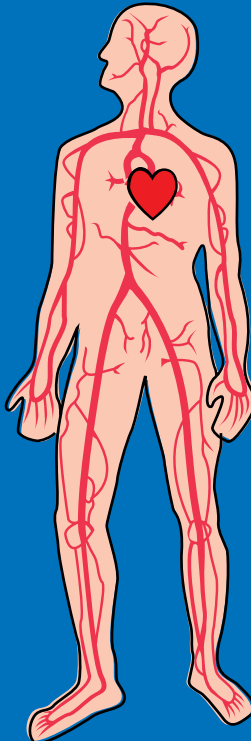
You have veins all over your body. They carry blood from your limbs and organs back to your heart. You can inject some drugs into some veins.



## Arteries

You have arteries all over your body. They feed blood from your heart to your limbs and organs.

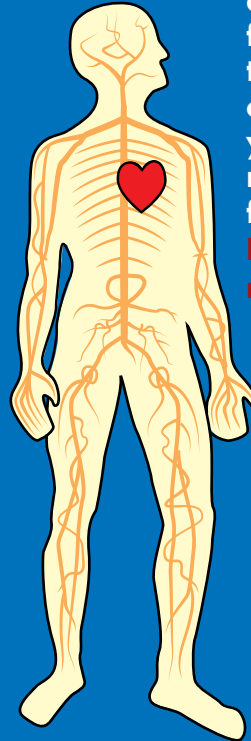
**NEVER inject into an artery!**



## Nerves

You have nerves all over your body. Nerves carry messages back and forth from your brain to the rest of your body so you can control movement and feel sensations.

**NEVER inject into a nerve!**



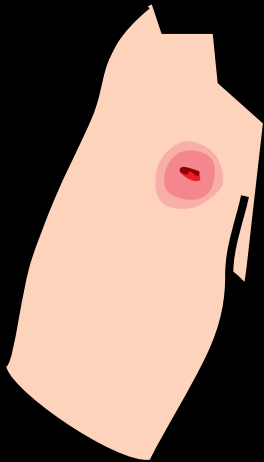
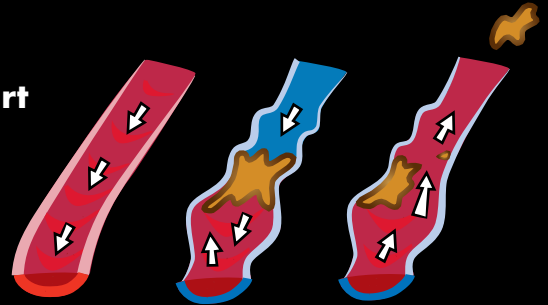


# Deep vein thrombosis

## Damaging your veins can kill you

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a common problem for groin injectors. Needle damage can cause blood clots which can block the vein — if these clots break free and find their way to your heart or lungs you could die.

Watch out for swelling, pain and redness (particularly in the back of the legs) — these are all signs of DVT. If you think you may have a problem get to the doctor to get treatment as soon as you can.



## Infections

An infection in the groin can be very serious. Because the vein in your groin is buried so deep it can be hard to spot trouble before it is too late....

Watch out for redness, swelling or tenderness at, or near, the injection site. If there is discharge (smelly gunk) coming from the wound then you are definitely in trouble. If you think you have a problem **STOP** injecting there and get to a doctor if things don't improve fast.

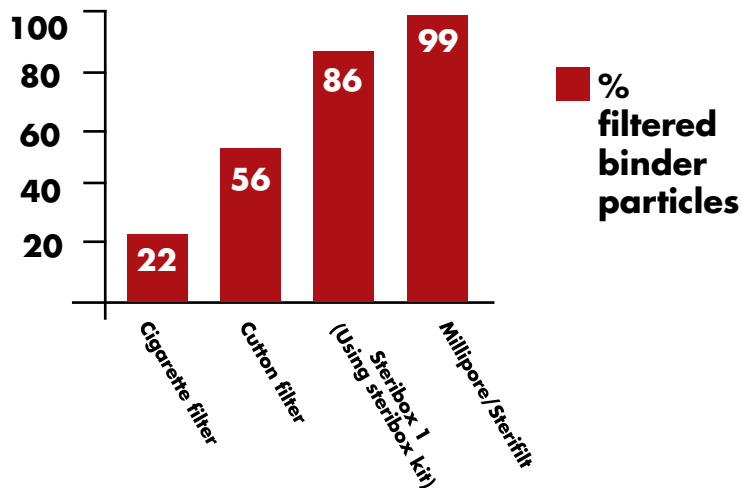
# Get it Checked Out!



**Injecting can cause all sorts of different problems. Most problems can be sorted out if you get help quickly. See your doctor and ask for advice and information at your needle exchange.**

# FILTER COMPARISON

This data comes from a study done at the University of Bath where they used different filters for filtering Subutex (buprenorphine) injections and then compared the results. Subutex and other pharmaceutical pills are not meant to be injected because they contain binders (ingredients that keep the materials in the medicine together) that can cause damage, inflammation, or blockages in veins. In the study, they used half an 8mg buprenorphine pill and the experiments were repeated several times with each filter. They compared the results to a unfiltered injection made from half an 8mg buprenorphine pill.



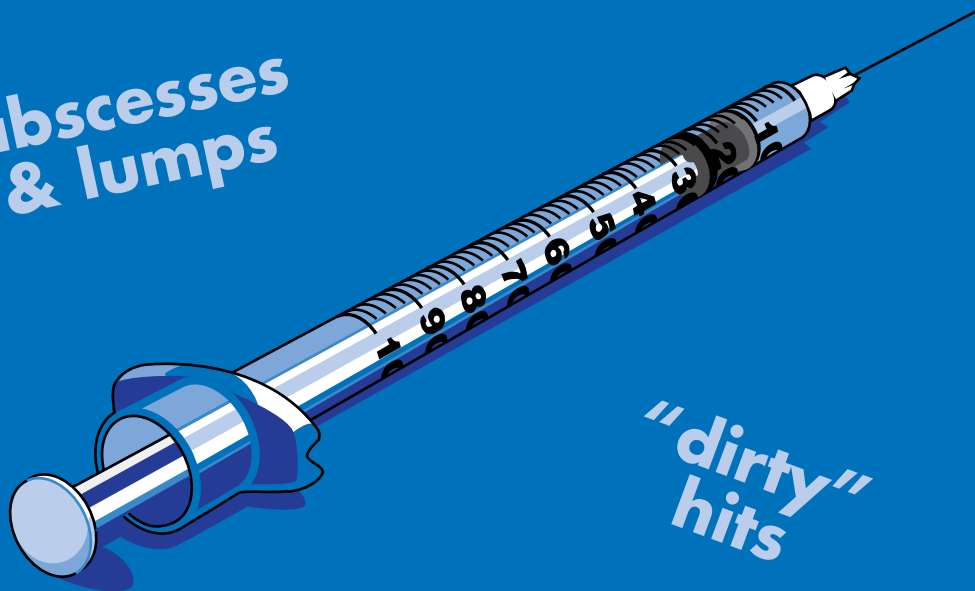
Sterifilt is comparable to Millipore in terms of filtering capability, but it should be noted that some of the unwanted particles still stay in the injection even after filtration.

Cotton filters that you get for free from the needle exchange programs filter only about 56% of the binders.

- The amount of water used for dilution doesn't weaken the potency of the drug.
- Using enough water keeps veins healthier.
- The Sterifilt filters particles, but retains virtually no active ingredients of the drug.

abscesses  
& lumps

arteries



"dirty"  
hits

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