

Quiz: Reducing the Harm of Injection Drug Use



Name (first name only): _____ Date: _____

1. **The *best* way to protect yourself from the harm of injection drug use is:**
 - a. abstinence—don't inject drugs
 - b. clean your needle with boiling water
 - c. share needles only with friends
 - d. none of the above

2. **To reduce the harm of injection drug use you should:**
 - a. always use new needles
 - b. if no new needle, clean the needle with bleach
 - c. never share needles or works
 - d. all of the above

3. **Someone who is infected with the HIV virus could possibly become reinfected with a mutation of the HIV virus that does not respond to treatment.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. **When cleaning a needle with bleach, you should leave the bleach in the syringe for *at least*:**
 - a. 5 seconds
 - b. 10 seconds
 - c. 30 seconds
 - d. 10 minutes

5. **Craving in response to seeing a needle, syringe, or other "works":**
 - a. is an automatic conditioned response
 - b. is a signal to engage in a non-drug-using activity
 - c. will decrease over time if you stop injecting drugs
 - d. all of the above

The ABCs of Reducing the Harm of Injection Drug Use



A = Abstinence

B = Buy or obtain new needles

C = Clean needle with full-strength bleach

A = Abstinence

Because any drug use is dangerous, the best way to prevent harm is by abstaining from drugs.

B = Buy or obtain new needles – Never share needles/works.

Other than abstaining from injection drug use, the second best way of avoiding harm is by always using a new needle—never share needles or works and don't reuse needles even if not shared with others. There are two reasons to always use new/sterile needles. First, it is the best way to be sure a needle is not contaminated. Second, because used needles (even ones that have been cleaned) are less sharp, they are more likely to harm/collapse your veins than new ones.

- **Never** assume a needle bought on the street is new even if it is in a wrapper.
- Besides getting new needles from a drug store, the best way to be sure you're getting a sterile needle is by using **needle exchange programs**.

C = Clean your needle/works with full-strength household bleach.

When you're not abstinent and don't have a new needle, the next best way of reducing the harm of injection drug use is by cleaning your needles/works with bleach.

Procedure:

1. Thoroughly rinse the syringe with water to remove any apparent blood or drug.
2. Submerge needle; fill barrel of syringe with bleach.
3. Shake/tap needle while bleach is in it to break up clots.
4. Keep bleach in syringe for **at least 30 seconds**. Remember: **Less than 30, it's still dirty!**
5. Squirt out bleach into waste cup (or cooker).
6. **Repeat** Steps 2–5 using new bleach and shake/tap for **another 30 seconds**.
7. Fill a disposable cup with water and fill the syringe.
8. Squirt out water into waste cup (or cooker).
9. Rinse again with clean water.
10. Eject water into waste cup (or cooker).
11. Take the syringe apart (remove the plunger) to improve the cleaning procedure.

Additional tips:

1. Never dilute the bleach with water; diluted bleach is less effective for killing HIV.
2. Never re-use bleach or rinse water.
3. Clean your needles before the blood inside them has a chance to dry; dried blood is harder to clean out of the needle.
4. Never put needle into the rinse water bottle; fill disposable cups with rinse water.
5. If you are unable to get bleach, do not inject drugs; other cleaning methods are not as effective at killing HIV.
6. Heating drug solution in a cooker for at least 15 seconds may also help to inactivate HIV.

(over)

Reducing Your Risk of Infection

- If you inject drugs, you can get infected with HIV, HBV, or HCV by sharing needles, syringes, and other injection equipment that someone else has used.
- Never share any of your equipment. You can also get HIV, HBV, and HCV by sharing cookers, cottons, or rinse water.
- Direct sharing occurs when you use another person's syringe after he or she has used it.
- Indirect sharing occurs when fluids are mixed without actually passing a syringe from one person to another.
- Routes of indirect sharing include:
 - Putting syringes in the same container;
 - Using a plunger from a previously used syringe to mix the drug solution;
 - Using a used syringe to distribute or return the drug;
 - Drawing drug from a shared cotton filter;
 - Returning the drug to a shared cooker;
 - “Beating the cotton” and “scraping the cooker;” and
 - Rinsing a syringe in other people's water.
- Do not put your needle in someone else's syringe rinse water, cotton, or cooker. HIV, HBV, or HCV can live in blood in all these places.
- Do not share drugs that have been drawn up in a syringe someone else has used.
- Disinfecting used syringes with bleach can reduce the risk of transmission, but a disinfected syringe is not as safe as a new, sterile needle and syringe.

Optional Slide

HHRP⁺



- Putting syringe in the same container of water or drug solution
- Using a plunger from a previously used syringe to mix the drug solution
- Using a used syringe to distribute or return the drug
- Drawing drug from a shared cotton filter
- Returning the drug to a shared cooker
- "Beating the cotton" and "scraping the cooker"
- Rinsing a syringe in other people's water

