

STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INFECTION

While blood clots are something most people who are injecting encounter, they can be very dangerous. Some blood clots won't dissolve on their own and need medical treatment. Medical professionals can administer Heparin (blood thinner) intravenously in these situations. Thrombolytics may also be used to breakdown clots.

Whatever the treatment, it's likely the medication will make your blood thinner. This means that after you inject, your blood will have a harder time coagulating, or stopping the flow. Be aware of this when using after receiving treatment for a blood clot.

NEVER SHOOT OLD BLOOD!

Got a needle with old blood in it? That blood can contain lots of bacteria. You can get a serious infection if you shoot that blood!

The best way to avoid abscesses, overdose, Hepatitis C, HIV, or other health conditions is to stop using.

You can always ask a staff person for information or assistance on safe practices for drug use, treatment, and safe sex practices.

LIFEPOINT SYRINGE ACCESS PROGRAM

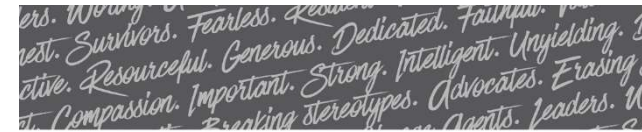
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1311 N 6th St
Milwaukee, WI 53212
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***HIV and Hep C Testing Available**

Adapted from resources created by the Harm Reduction Coalition

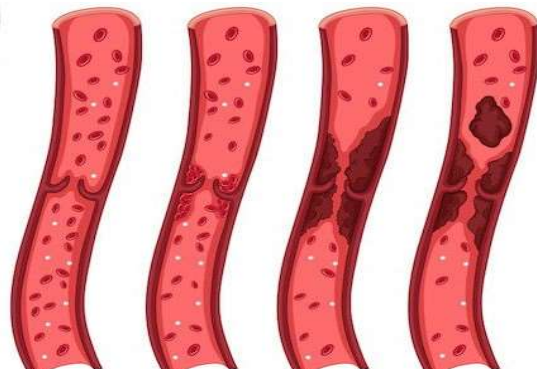
BLOOD CLOTS

Who Needs Them Anyway?



WHAT IS A BLOOD CLOT AND HOW DOES IT FORM?

A blood clot is a semisolid mass of thick blood that stops excessive bleeding when a blood vessel is damaged. Often blood clots are formed when a person shoots in the same spot over and over. After injecting, the vein forms a scab where the needle was inserted. If a person re-inserts a needle where the scab was, the scab can break off into the blood stream and block the blood flow. Drug injection causes the lining of the vein walls to become rough from scar tissue, allowing blood to stick to it easily and form a blockage.



WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I HAVE A BLOOD CLOT?

The consequences of a blood clot can range from low to high threat situations. In terms of low threats, your body will be more susceptible to abscesses and infections. You may also waste more shots and your veins may collapse quicker. In terms of high threats, you can develop a blood clot in the lung or brain, both of which can result in death. Strokes can also be caused by blood clots.

HOW DO I KNOW I HAVE A BLOOD CLOT?

If one of your limbs feels painful, tender, and is also swelling you may have a blood clot. Additional symptoms include redness, warmth, and achiness in the area of the clot (which will probably be a different spot than the injection site since clots usually break off and move).

PREVENTION

1. **Know what you are shooting:** Shooting pills? Many companies make their pills harder to break down, which means you're likely shooting plastic into your veins. This can cause clots.
2. **Know your dealer:** Many drugs are cut with things that may not break down when cooked. Build trust with your dealer and ask what the drug has been cut with. Proceed with caution when using drugs purchased from a new dealer.
3. **Rotate your spot:** Veins need time to heal. If you always hit the same spot, scar tissue will build up, slow your circulation, and could even collapse the vein.
4. **If you must use the same vein, always shoot downstream of the last spot.** Remember, downstream is further up your arm (and closer to your heart) because veins carry blood toward the heart.
5. **Exercise the parts of the body you normally shoot in.** This will help maintain or develop healthy blood flow.