

**HIV, AIDS & drug use / SCODA.**

**Contributors**

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
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## DISPOSE OF USED WORKS SAFELY

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- The best way is to go to a needle exchange. If you can't get to one:
  - Remove the needle and plunger
  - Drop the needle into the barrel, base first
  - Push the plunger back in the barrel until the needle bends and jams
  - bag it and bin it
- DON'T use this method if your syringe is 1 ml or smaller as the needle can stick through the barrel. Instead, put the syringe in an empty ring-pull can, plug the hole and then bin it.

## THE HIV ANTIBODY TEST

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- You can have a test to see if you have been infected with HIV.
- If you are infected with HIV your immune system produces antibodies to the virus.
- The test shows if antibodies to HIV have developed.
- Getting a negative test result does not mean that there is no HIV in your bloodstream. It can take three months or more after infection for antibodies to develop. It is a good idea to have a second test three months later, during which time you do not do anything risky like sharing works or having unsafe sex.
- There can be good and bad consequences of having a test. You should check these out by talking to your local drugs service or the staff at the clinic which does the test before you decide whether you want to have the test.
- Genito Urinary Clinics (sexually transmitted disease clinics) do not charge for the test, provide pre and post test counselling, and are confidential.
- GPs will carry out the test, but remember they have to pass a medical report to insurance companies if you apply for endowment mortgages or life insurance.

HIV  
& AIDS  
DRUG USE

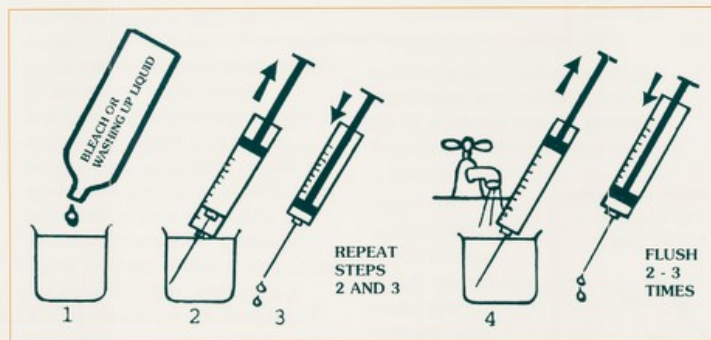
## BASIC INFORMATION

- HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is passed on by infected blood, semen, pre-cum or vaginal fluids getting into the blood of another person. This can happen if you have unprotected penetrative sex, or share injecting equipment (needles, syringes, filters, spoons and water) with an infected person.
- You can't be infected from social contact such as touching, hugging, shaking hands, kissing, sharing cups, knives and forks, or from toilet seats.
- HIV damages the body's defence system, the "immune system".
- People with HIV can remain healthy for years but may develop illnesses because of their HIV infection. These can often be successfully treated if detected early.
- AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a medical diagnosis which is made when people who are infected with HIV develop particular illnesses, because their immune system is damaged.

## SAFER DRUG USE

- If you don't inject drugs now, don't start injecting. Street drugs are rarely pure. Smoking, sniffing or swallowing will not put you at risk of HIV from drug use.
- If you can, stop injecting. There are many drug services around the country and they may be able to help you stop injecting. An oral methadone script is safer than injecting street drugs. The "HELP" section at the end of this leaflet tells you how to find your nearest or most appropriate service.
- If you don't feel ready to stop injecting, keep your own needle and syringe. NEVER lend them or borrow someone else's works, not even a partner's, no matter how desperate you are.

- Try to use a new needle and syringe when you inject. Some chemists will sell them to you and in many parts of the country you can exchange your used works for new ones. Your local drug service can tell you where to get new needles and syringes.
- Use the smallest needle you can, this lessens the risk of damage, inflammation and infection.
- Try not to use the same veins all the time. Rotate sites to let them heal.



## CLEANING WORKS

- If you really feel there is no other option, and you decide to use someone else's needle and syringe, you can reduce the chance of being infected by cleaning the works before you use them.
- Always flush the works with clean cold water as soon as possible after use (before the blood has started to dry). This will remove some of the blood and undissolved drug which can't get through the needle, but around which germs can develop. Flushing works like this keeps them in better condition.

## IF WORKS ARE SHARED CLEAN THEM WITH UNDILUTED BLEACH OR DILUTED WASHING UP LIQUID:

### EITHER

- 1 Put undiluted thin bleach (e.g. 'Milton') into a cup or glass.
- 2 Make sure the needle is covered by the bleach then pull the plunger right back so the barrel is filled.
- 3 Flush the bleach down a sink or drain. Do steps 2 and 3 again.
- 4 Flush the needle and syringe with clean cold water two or three times.

### OR, if you can't get hold of bleach:

- 1 Put a squirt of washing up liquid in a cup or glass and add cold water.
- 2 Make sure the needle is covered by the water then pull the plunger right back so the syringe is full.
- 3 Flush the liquid away, down the sink, into a drain or onto the floor. Do steps 2 and 3 again.
- 4 Flush the works two or three times with clean cold water.

### IF

You have been boiling your works, carry on doing this as it's the best way of cleaning them. Not all needles and syringes can be boiled, but if yours can, take the needle and syringe apart, put the pieces into cold water, then boil them for five minutes. These makes of syringe have been found to buckle if left in boiling water for five minutes, so don't boil them:

**Company**  
Sabre  
Sherwood  
S and N Everett

**Syringe Trademark/Size**  
Sabre (or Gillette) all sizes  
Monoject 1 ml syringe  
10 ml

## PREGNANCY

- Habitual use of heroin can lead to a woman's periods stopping, but it is still possible for her to get pregnant.
  - Babies of HIV+ mothers are born with the mother's antibodies. For the majority of babies these antibodies will clear and they will remain well. However, some babies will become HIV+ and may develop illnesses related to HIV infection.
  - Condoms give a high degree of protection against pregnancy and the transmission of HIV.
- However, for extra protection using the cap, diaphragm or the pill as well as a condom will better prevent unwanted pregnancy.
- If you are thinking about becoming pregnant, or you are pregnant and want advice, the Family Planning Clinic, your local drug service or your doctor can give you information so you can make a decision about what you want to do.
  - If you are pregnant, go to the ante-natal clinic as this can help to keep you and your baby well.

## KEEPING WELL

- Just because you use drugs doesn't mean you can't look after your body.
- Try to eat fresh food - fruit and vegetables are cheap and contain vitamins your body needs.
- Try to get regular sleep so your body can rest.
- Practising safer sex and safer drug use is still important even if you are HIV+, to avoid possible re-infection with a different strain of the virus.
- If you are unwell, see a doctor. The sooner illnesses are treated, the better it is. If you haven't got a doctor, your local drug service might be able to help you get medical treatment.

## GETTING HELP

- If you want more information or advice on HIV, to find out about the test, or discuss your drug problem, contact one of the services below:
  - **THE NATIONAL AIDS HELPLINE** provides advice and information on all aspects of HIV/AIDS to anyone. Dial 0800 567123. The call is free and confidential and there are people to answer your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week in eight languages.
  - **YOUR LOCAL GENITO URINARY MEDICINE (GUM) CLINIC** (Sometimes called sexually transmitted disease clinic or special clinic) is listed in the 'phone book under 'venereal diseases' or ask your GP or the Citizens Advice Bureau.
  - **YOUR LOCAL DRUG SERVICE** if you don't know where it is, your GP, pharmacist, local library, Citizens Advice Bureau or the Samaritans can help you find it.
- or dial 100 and ask the operator for Freephone Drug Problems. The call is free and you will hear a recorded message which lists a drug service for every county in England and telephone numbers for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- MAINLINERS** is a self-help and support group for drug users who are affected by HIV and AIDS. They work mainly in Greater London, but you can contact them by ringing 071-737 3141.
- POSITIVELY WOMEN** is a self-help group for women who are HIV positive. Meetings are in London but you can contact them on 071-490 5515.

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## SAFER SEX

- It is easy to forget about safer sex if you are stoned or drunk.
- HIV can be passed on during vaginal or anal sex without a condom.
- The risk of HIV being passed on during oral sex is difficult to measure. At present oral sex is thought to be much less risky than vaginal or anal sex.
- Safer sex can be fun. Use your imagination and discover new ways to give and get sexual pleasure.
- You can: kiss and lick all over the body, stroke and fondle, masturbate each other, act out your fantasies, providing the skin is unbroken.



If you have penetrative sex, always use a condom (Durex, sheath, rubber, johnny). Choose condoms with this kite mark symbol on the packet as they meet agreed standards. Some condoms are lubricated with Nonoxynol 9 which has been shown to kill HIV in laboratory conditions. However, some people have found that Nonoxynol 9 irritates the vagina and anus and if inflammation occurs, it may make it easier for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases to be passed on. Most needle exchange schemes will give you free condoms and you can also get them free from family planning clinics.

Learn how to put the condom on correctly. Many of the problems people have with



condoms are because they put them on wrongly. Practise by yourself, or have more fun practising with your partner.

Hold the condom by the tip to keep out air and then roll the condom down over the erect penis. Do this gently. Be careful not to tear the condom with your nails.

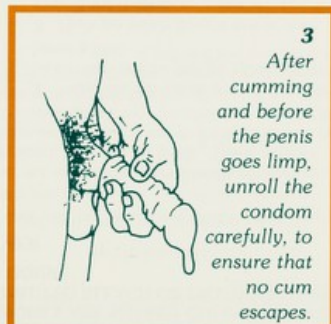
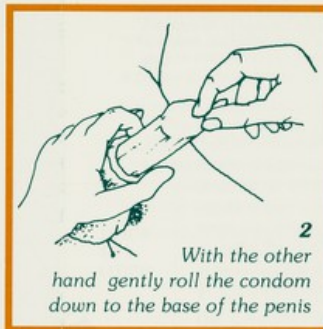
If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water based like KY Jelly. **Don't use oil based lubricants** like vaseline, baby oil or olive oil as they rot the rubber.

After cumming, roll the condom off before the penis goes limp. Wrap the condom in a tissue and put it down the

toilet or in a bin.

Using a condom is easy, helps to

protect from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and can add even more fun to having sex. Forget all you have ever been told about them, and give it a go!



## CONDOMS