

What to expect

heroin

The high

- A high that lasts 20 minutes – 2 hours
- Feeling intense pleasure and reduced pain
- Warm skin, dry mouth, heavy feeling arms and legs
- Nausea, vomiting and severe itching
- Slow, shallow breathing

Coming down

- Feeling restless, sweaty, stomach cramps and diarrhea
- Muscle spasms and bone pain
- High blood pressure
- Strong cravings for more heroin

 Note: combining substances can be dangerous. Proceed with caution.

crack/coke

The high

- A high that lasts 15–45 minutes
- Feeling an intense, euphoric rush
- Warm skin, dry mouth
- Feeling thirsty, not hungry
- Rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Auditory hallucinations, delusions

Coming down

- Feeling restless, sweaty and twitchy
- Sensitivity to noise and light
- Feelings of paranoia
- Strong cravings for more crack

Signs of overdose

heroin overdose

Feels like:

- You can't stay awake
- You don't have any energy or strength
- You can't walk, can't talk

Looks like:

- Slow pulse or no pulse
- Slow breathing or no breathing
- Skin looks pale and blue, feels cold
- Can't wake up or talk
- Pupils are pinned or eyes are rolled back
- Vomiting
- Body is limp

crack/coke overdose

Feels like:

- Your heart is pumping fast
- You are short of breath
- Your body is hot, sweaty and shaky
- You have chest pain
- You can't talk, can't walk

Looks like:

- Fast pulse or no pulse
- Fast or no breathing
- Hot and sweaty skin
- Confusion, hallucinations, unconscious
- Can't talk, can't walk
- Vomiting
- Seizures

What to do if someone ODs

- 1 Call out for help – do not leave the victim
- 2 If they've OD'd on heroin, try to get them awake and moving
If they've OD'd on crack/coke, try to get them to slow down and relax
- 3 Call 9-1-1 for an ambulance, send someone to seek help and report back
- 4 Tell paramedics as much as you can about what happened

FH Print Shop # 264133

Original pamphlet: Vancouver Coastal Health, February 2011

Your peers created this harm reduction pamphlet for you. **Be safe.**



Safer Injecting

heroin crack/coke

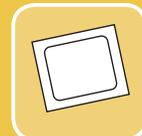
What you need to inject safer:



Sterile needle



Sterile water



Alcohol swabs



Cotton filter or tampon (unscented)



Cooker or spoon



Rubbie



Lighter or candle



Ascorbic acid/vitamin C (crack only)



Clean hands

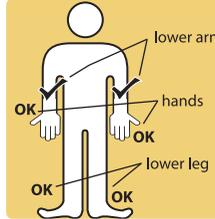


the user-friendly series

How to inject safer

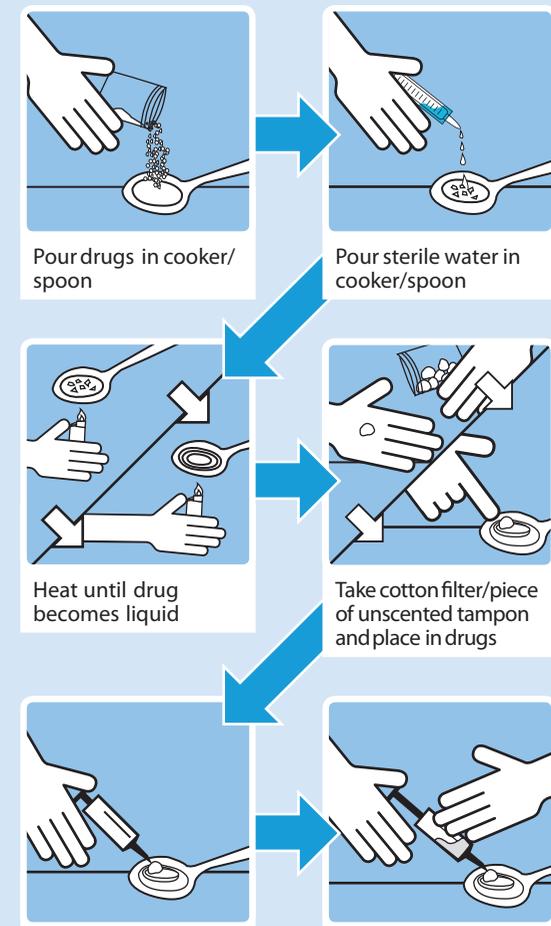
1 

Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol swabs

2 

Choose your injection site (lower arm is safest. If you have to inject elsewhere, lower leg then hand are OK)

3 Prepare your drugs – heroin



Pour drugs in cooker/spoon

Pour sterile water in cooker/spoon

Heat until drug becomes liquid

Take cotton filter/piece of unscented tampon and place in drugs

Place needle in filter

Draw liquid into needle

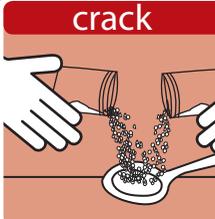
3 Prepare your drugs – crack/coke

coke

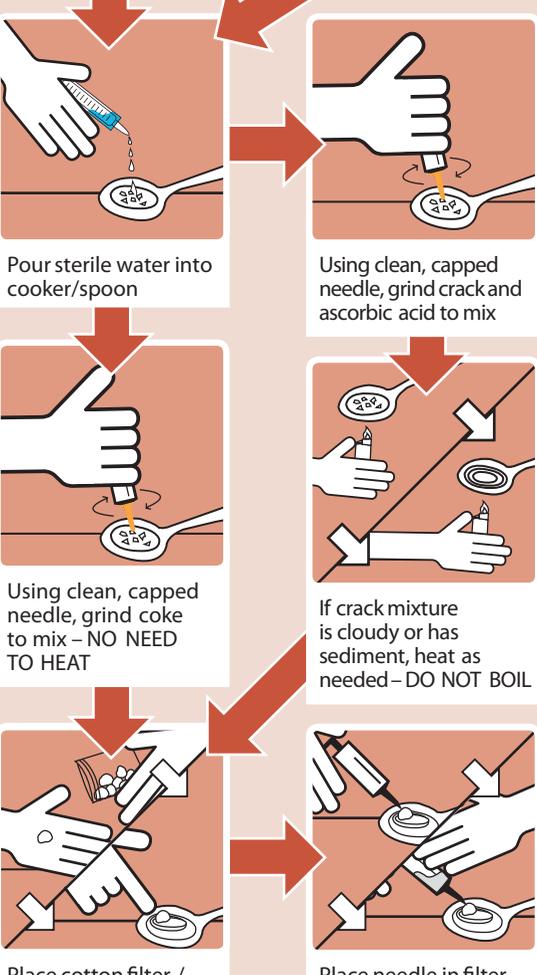


Pour coke into cooker/spoon

crack



Pour in just enough ascorbic acid to dissolve crack.



Pour sterile water into cooker/spoon

Using clean, capped needle, grind crack and ascorbic acid to mix

Using clean, capped needle, grind coke to mix – NO NEED TO HEAT

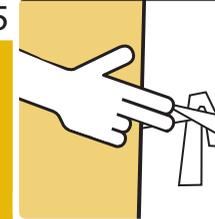
If crack mixture is cloudy or has sediment, heat as needed – DO NOT BOIL

Place cotton filter / piece of unscented tampon in drugs

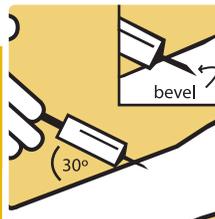
Place needle in filter and draw liquid into needle

4 

Clean your injection site with an alcohol swab

5 

Tie off with a rubber tie using a quick release

6 

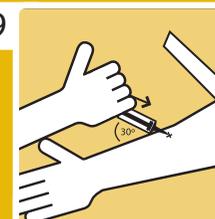
Insert your needle with the bevel up, at a 30 degree angle towards your head

7 

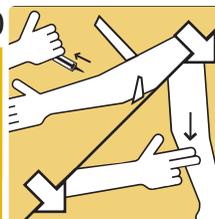
Flag your needle: push needle in a little and pull back on plunger until you see blood in the needle

8 

Loosen your tie

9 

Inject your drugs slowly

10 

Pull out and with clean hands, apply pressure to injection site

11 

Safely dispose of all equipment – make it your gig to return your rig

Safer injection tips

- Taste your drugs before you use
- Always use with a buddy
- Use a new needle for each injection
- Please don't break off the tip of your needle or re-cap it – it's not safe
- Remember: two holes in your arm are better than one in the ground – If you haven't used in a while, reduce your dose
- **Protect yourself and your community – always dispose of your equipment safely**

injecting

- The most dangerous place to inject is your neck
- To make your veins more visible: jog on the spot or do push-ups before tying off
- If you can't see the bevel, look for the numbers on the side of your needle, they often line up with the bevel

filters

- Unscented tampons are safe to use as filters – do not use cigarette filters
- Use a filter once only – using it more than once can lead to "cotton fever"

ties

- Ties should be on for two minutes maximum
- If your hand falls asleep or arm turns red while tied off, the tie is too tight, or has been on too long

abscesses and wounds

- Keep injection sites clean and watch for abscesses – they can happen anywhere on the body, not just where you inject
- If you have an abscess, do not pop it
- Seek medical care for treatment of abscesses or wounds – they can lead to dangerous infections