

Harm Reduction Glossary

Welcome to the Harm Reduction Glossary. In this glossary you will find some commonly used terms. If you have any questions or would like to have more terms included please email me at alanfranciscus@hcvadvocate.org

Please visit our [Harm Reduction fact sheets](#) for more detailed information about these terms.

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A

- A Miss:** missing a vein and going into the flesh when injecting drugs.
- Abscess:** a walled off section of pus.
- Acamprosate:** brand name Campral; a drug used to treat alcohol addiction.
- Acid:** see lysergic acid diethylamide.
- Addiction:** a dependence on a substance.
- Alcohol (ethanol):** a group of beverages produced by fermentation or a
- Aluminum Foil:** fuel used to heat drugs; also called a cooker.
- Alcoholic:** someone who suffers from alcohol dependence.
- Amphetamine:** a stimulant drug that acts on the central nervous system. Related drugs include Amphetamine, dexamphetamine, and methamphetamine. Street names include speed, bennies, white crosses, black beauties, crosses, hearts, truck drivers, and uppers.
- Amyl Nitrite:** an inhalant used for a short term high and often used during sex. Street names: poppers.
- Antabuse:** disulfiram: a drug to assist people to withdraw from alcohol.

B

- Barbiturate:** drugs that suppress the central nervous system such as phenobarbital, and secobarbital.
- Benzodiazepine:** drugs that are used mainly as sedatives, tranquilizers and muscle relaxers. Drugs in this class include diazepam, alprazolam, clonazepam,

lorazepam, Xanax, valium, Ativan and klonopin. Street names include benzos, candy, downers, tranks, blue V., and roofies.

Bleach: full strength common household bleach is used to clean needles to inject drugs. It is not known if bleach will kill hepatitis C in the needle.

Bath Salts: bath salts (synthetic cathinones) that can be swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected to get high.

Bottle Caps: used to heat up and mix heroin and other drugs to inject. Also see spoons (cookers).

Buprenorphine: an opioid used to treat pain and opioid addiction. One brand is Subutex and another is combined with naloxone (suboxone) to treat opioid addiction.

C

Campral: see acamprosate

Cannabis: botanical name for marijuana. See marijuana.

Cocaine: an anesthetic used medically for ear, nose and throat surgery. It is a central nervous system stimulant that can be snorted, sniffed, rubbed on the gums, injected, and can be freebased (crack cocaine). Street names include: coke, blow, nose candy, snow, toot and dust.

Collapsed Vein: a vein that becomes damaged and collapses from repeated injections.

Cooker: used to heat and mix drugs. It can be a spoon or something similar such as aluminum foil or a soda pop can.

Cotton: used to filter out impurities or dirt when drawing up a into the syringe. Cigarette filters or Q-tips are also used but they are not recommended.

Cotton Fever: an infection caused by bacteria inside of a filter—usually a cotton—used to inject drugs.

Crack Cocaine: a crystalized form of cocaine that is heated and smoked.

D

Detoxification: detox; the effect of someone withdrawing from addiction to drugs.

Disulfiram: see Antabuse.

Drug Addict: someone addicted to drugs.

E

Endocarditis: an infection of the inner lining of the heart.

Ethanol see alcohol.

F

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: a pattern of delayed mental and physical growth in the fetus due to excess alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Fentanyl (fentanil): a potent synthetic opioid pain medication in a transdermal patch, sublingually (under the tongue), smoked or injected.

H

Harm Reduction: a set of practical steps to reduce the mental, emotional or physical harm that people may experience from a substance.

Hashish: a cannabis resin. It can be smoked, swallowed or baked and eaten. Common names include hash, gangster, hash oil, and hemp

Hepatitis: inflammation of the liver. Viral hepatitis includes hepatitis A, B, C, D and E.

Heroin: an opioid drug made from morphine. It is a natural substance taken from the Asian poppy plant. It can be injected, smoked, snorted, and sniffed. Common names include smack, horse, brown sugar, dope, junk, and white horse.

HIV: Human immunodeficiency virus.

I

IDU: injection drug user.

Injection Drug User: someone who injects drugs.

Indirect Sharing: indirect sharing occurs when people who inject drugs (PWID) use their own syringe or needle but share some, or all, of the other equipment used during the injection drug use process.

Intramuscular (IM): injections that occur in the upper arm, thigh or another muscle area. Drugs injected IM absorb more slowly than those delivered intravenously.

Intranasal: drugs taken through the nose (snorting).

Intravenous (IV): injections that occur directly into a vein most often in the arm but also in the hands, neck, feet, chest and other parts of the body. This is the most common form of injection because the drug is delivered quickly to

the brain and heart.

IVDU: Intravenous drug user. Included within IDVU, injecting drug user, people who inject drugs (PWID).

L

Lemon juice: used to help break down the drug while mixing. Lemon juice is not recommended because bacteria can grow on the outside of it. Injecting it can lead to an infection that could cause blindness. Instead, sterile citric acid is recommended.

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD): a psychedelic/hallucinogenic drug. Street names include A, window pane, back breaker, Elvis, loony toons, pane, Superman, white lightning, and acid.

M

Marijuana: a preparation of the Cannabis plant. A psychoactive drug that can be smoked, eaten or vaporized. It is legal and regulated in some states but under Federal law it is still illegal to possess or be under the influence of Cannabis. Street names include dope, ganja, grass, joint, bud, Mary Jane, and weed.

Maintenance Therapy: Treatment of a drug addiction using a substitute drug. An example would be methadone maintenance therapy.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT): treatment programs that combine behavioral therapy and medication such as methadone maintenance to treat substance use disorders.

Mescaline: A hallucinogenic substance from the peyote cactus. Street names include beans, buttons and love trip.

Methadone: a synthetic opiate drug used as maintenance therapy for people who are dependent on opioids.

Methamphetamine (Meth): meth is a central nervous system stimulant that can be taken as a pill, smoked, injected or inhaled. Also see amphetamine. Street names include ice, glass, and speed.

N

Naloxone (Narcan): a medication used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose.

Naltrexone: is a drug used to treat alcohol addiction. Also in an injectable form - see Vivitrol.

Narcan: see naloxone.

Needle Exchange: a service that provides clean needles and other supplies for people who inject drugs. Needle exchange programs (NEPs) also provide other programs to help PWID to reduce the potential harm of drug use.

Needle Gauge/Size: the thickness of the needle; needles for people who inject drugs come in various sizes or gauges—insulin needles (1/2 inch) and tuberculin (5/8 inch) seem to work better. People who inject drugs have preferences for what types of gauges they use. Talk with a needle exchange or harm reduction worker to find out more.

O

Opioids: A class of depressant drugs. Natural opioids include heroin, opium, morphine and codeine. Synthesized opioids include fentanyl, tramadol, and many more.

Opium: From the opium poppy. The extract is used to make morphine which is chemically made to heroin. Street names include Big O, black stuff, block, gum and hop.

Overdose: a lethal dose of a drug.

Oxycodone: a semi-synthesized drug from the Persian poppy. It can be taken by pill (mouth), sublingual (under the tongue), intramuscular (into a muscle), intravenous (into a vein), intranasal (nose), subcutaneous (under the skin), and transdermal (skin patch). The pill form can be crushed and injected.

P

Pipe: used to smoke meth, crack, heroin, opium and many other substances.

Popping: injecting drugs under the skin (skin popping) or into a muscle (muscle popping).

Rig/Point: a syringe/needle a person uses to inject a drug.

PWID: People who inject drugs.

R

Rolling Papers: used to roll marijuana (joints) and other drugs.

S

Secondary Sharing: see indirect sharing.

Snorting: the use of a tool such as a straw or a rolled up dollar bill to snort into the nose coke, crank, heroin or other drugs.

Speed: see amphetamine

Spoons: used to heat up and mix heroin and other drugs to inject. Also bottle caps.

Straw: used to snort crushed up pills or powder such as cocaine, methamphetamine (meth) or heroin (horse). A dollar bill is also used.

Subcutaneous Injections (SC): also called “skin popping” occurs by creating a small bubble just beneath the skin that slowly releases the drug into the body. This is faster than IM but slower than IV. For a reference a tuberculosis shot is a SC injection.

Sublingual: under the tongue.

Supervised Injection Site: a legal and medically supervised facility to inject drugs for drug users to access various services.

Syringe: The syringe has three main parts: 1). **Plunger** that fits into the barrel of the syringe 2). **Barrel** is the chamber that holds the liquid (drug) and 3). **Needle** is the thin metal that punctures the skin. Street name: Rig/Point

T

Tie: see tourniquet.

Topiramate: a drug that is used ‘off-label’ to treat alcohol addiction.

Tourniquet: a medical elastic device or something similar used to tie off an arm to help locate a vein. It can also be a belt or something similar.

Transdermal: drugs delivered through a patch on the skin.

V

Vivitrol: an extended release version of naltrexone. It is an injectable medication that is administered once a month to treat alcohol addiction.

W

Water: used when mixing a drug to help break it down and cook it.