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HCV & Harm Reduction

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BLEACH

Using bleach to clean syringes can POSSIBLY kill HCV. There is no guarantee that HCV will be killed using bleach. The following steps will help. To be certain HCV infected blood is not in the syringe you are using to inject you should NEVER share a syringe with another person and NEVER reuse a syringe of your own. **You cannot give yourself HCV**, but reusing a syringe can cause trauma and bacterial infection.

To clean a syringe with bleach:

1. Rinse the syringe with COLD water a few times. You can do this by drawing cold water in to the syringe.
2. Fill the syringe with pure bleach. Leave the bleach in the syringe for AS CLOSE TO 2 minutes as possible. The longer the bleach rests in the syringe the greater the chance HCV will be killed.
3. After 2 minutes push all of the bleach out of the syringe.
4. Fill and empty the syringe with COLD water at least 3 times. You want to make sure all bleach is out of the syringe. Injecting bleach into your veins can be harmful as well as painful.

Remember:

- There is NO WAY to guarantee HCV infected blood is removed from a syringe using bleach.
- The best thing to do is NOT share a syringe and to only use once.
- Leave bleach in for 2 minutes.
- Use COLD water before and after filling the syringe with bleach.
- If you must reuse a syringe be sure that you clean it properly even if you aren't sharing it.

learn more by visiting www.hcvadvocate.org

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