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HCV & Harm Reduction

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DEFINITIONS

A Cooker is what the drugs are heated or mixed in. This is most often a spoon or something similar but can also be tin foil or a soda pop can.

A tourniquet is used to tie the arm off and help locate a vein. When a medical elastic tourniquet is not available a belt or something similar may be used.

A Rig/Point is the syringe/needle a person uses to inject a drug.

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

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

Water is used when mixing the drug to help break it down/cook it.

Subcutaneous injections (SC) or "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 reference a tuberculosis shot is a SC injection.

A straw is used to snort crushed up pills or other drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine (meth) or heroin. A dollar bill is also often used. When possible you should avoid this because money is especially dirty (literally).

A pipe is used to smoke meth, crack, heroin and many other substances.

Cotton is used to filter any impurities or dirt as the drug is drawn into the syringe. Cigarette filters or Q-tips are also used but not recommended.

Lemon juice is often used to help break down the drug while mixing. Lemon juice IS NOT recommended. The bacteria that grows on the outside of a lemon can cause an infection that could lead to blindness. Sterile citric acid is recommended.

learn more by visiting www.hcvadvocate.org

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