

WHO-ASSIST Risks of Injecting Card – Information (for Clients)

Using substances by injection increases the risk of harm from substance use. This harm can come from:

- **The substance**
 - If you inject any drug you are more likely to become dependent.
 - If you inject amphetamines or cocaine you are more likely to experience psychosis.
 - If you inject heroin or other sedatives you are more likely to overdose.
- **The injecting behaviour**
 - If you inject you may damage your skin and veins and get infections.
 - You may cause scars, bruises, swelling, abscesses and ulcers.
 - Your veins might collapse.
 - If you inject into the neck you can cause a stroke.
- **Sharing of injecting equipment**
 - If you share injecting equipment (needles & syringes, spoons, filters, etc.) you are more likely to spread blood borne viruses like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

❖ It is safer not to inject

❖ If you do inject:

- ✓ always use clean equipment (e.g. needles & syringes, spoons, filters, etc.)
- ✓ always use a new needle and syringe for every hit
- ✓ don't share equipment with other people
- ✓ clean the preparation area, your hands and the injection site
- ✓ use a different injecting site each time
- ✓ inject slowly
- ✓ put your used needle and syringe in a hard container and dispose of it safely
- ✓ have regular checks by a doctor for blood borne viruses

❖ If you use stimulant drugs like amphetamines or cocaine the following tips will help you reduce your risk of psychosis.

- ✓ avoid injecting and smoking
- ✓ avoid using on a daily basis

❖ If you use depressant drugs like heroin the following tips will help you reduce your risk of overdose.

- ✓ avoid using other drugs, especially sedatives or alcohol, on the same day
- ✓ use a small amount and always have a trial "taste" of a new batch
- ✓ have someone with you when you are using
- ✓ avoid injecting in places where no-one can get to you if you do overdose
- ✓ know the telephone numbers of the ambulance service

❖ Clean Needle Program

The Clean Needle Program can provide you with a range of free services including sterile injecting equipment, disposal equipment, education and information about safer injecting and referral to drug treatment, health and social services.

Contact the **Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)** on **1300 13 1340** for the location of your nearest Clean Needle Program.