

Steps to Reduce the Risk of Infection

Cooking



1. Use a clean cooker and clean water to cook your hit
2. Filter the hit well
3. Use a new cotton every time you draw up a hit

Cleaning



1. Wash your hands and the injection site
2. Use alcohol pads and wipe back & forth (rub hard) over injection site to remove dirt
3. Then use a new alcohol pad and press down over spot you are going to inject
4. Wipe in small circles from the middle of the injection spot; making larger circles as you go

Injecting



1. Use a new sterile syringe each time you inject
2. Rotate injection sites
3. Do not shoot into or near an abscess
4. Never lick your point before injecting (mouths can contain germs)

Tetanus Booster – Get one every five (5) years

Wound Clinic

Abscess Treatment & Care

No appointment needed

Healthcare for the Homeless Medical Clinic

[a program of the Metropolitan Development Council]

2342 Tacoma Ave S.
Tacoma, WA
253 284-9023



Contact clinic for current hours

**** Arrive at least 30 minutes early to get a place in line**

Other Clinics Near You

Community Health Care **253 597-4550**

Multiple Pierce County Clinics
Multiple languages available

PLU Wellness Clinic

Parkland: 253 535-7354

Corner of 121st and Pacific Avenue
Weekdays and evening hours

SeaMar Clinic

Tacoma: 253 593-2144

1112 South Cushman

Puyallup: 253 864-4550

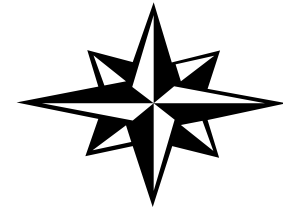
10217 125th Street Court East

Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

Spanish language available

ABSCESS CARE AND PREVENTION

Information for Injection Drug Users



For Pierce County
Syringe Exchange Sites call:
Point Defiance AIDS Project
253 272-4857

or

Tacoma-Pierce County Health
Department Outreach Services
253 798-6410



ABSCESS CARE AND PREVENTION

What is a skin abscess?

- Pocket of pus
- More likely with
 - ✓ skin-popping
 - ✓ muscling
 - ✓ missing a vein
- Often found at injection sites, but can be found elsewhere
- May occur even after you stop injecting

How do you know it's an abscess?

- Pink or reddish lump on skin
- Tender or painful
- Warm or hot to touch
- Red streaks and/or rapid swelling indicates infection is spreading

How can an abscess make you feel?

- Tired or sick
- Feverish, may have chills
- Chest pains may occur if infection goes to heart or lungs

What should I do if I get an abscess?

- **Treat at home with warm soaks if**
 - ✓ No red streaks
 - ✓ Skin not hot and puffy
- **Go to a clinic if abscess**
 - ✓ Not improving, especially after 5-7 days
 - ✓ Gets bigger and/or very painful
 - ✓ Is hot and puffy
 - ✓ Red streaks start spreading from the abscess go ASAP!
- **Go to emergency room if**
 - ✓ Chest pain
 - ✓ High fever, chills
 - ✓ Infection looks like it is spreading fast

Warning

- **Do not** shoot into or near an abscess
- **Do not** squeeze or cut into an abscess yourself - infection could move into blood, then heart/lungs
- **Do not** leave draining abscesses uncovered - the drainage is contagious

How do you soak/use compresses?

- Use warm/hot water (that doesn't burn your skin)
- Soak in tub of plain hot water or hot water with Epsom salts
- Use hot, wet, clean washcloth and hold on abscess, if abscess cannot be soaked in tub
- Soak abscess 3 to 4 times a day for 10-15 minutes each time, if possible
- Cover with a clean dry bandage after soaking
- **STOP** soaking/using compresses when abscess starts draining

What about antibiotics?



- Take all antibiotics, if prescribed, even if you feel better
- Take with food and water to avoid upset stomach (alcohol, juice, and soda will make the infection worse)
- Take antibiotics after you fix (heroin)
- Never share antibiotics, someone else's pills may not cure your infection
- Return to doctor if infection is not better after taking antibiotics