



RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE POLICIES TO **facilitate use of ascorbic acid to dissolve drugs** (e.g., crack cocaine, some forms of heroin)



DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES

- Ask clients if ascorbic acid is required to dissolve the drug(s) to be injected
- If needed, distribute single-use sachets of ascorbic acid
- If needed, offer ascorbic acid with each needle, sterile water, cooker, sterile filter, and alcohol swab provided
- If needed, based on the quantity requested by clients with no limits

EDUCATE ABOUT

- Correct single person use of ascorbic acid
- Potential HIV- and HCV-related risks associated with sharing ascorbic acid
- Risks of bacterial/fungal infections associated with using spore-contaminated lemon juice and other acid
- How to determine the smallest amount of acid needed to dissolve the drug of choice to avoid vein irritation/damage
- Safer use of equipment
- Safer injection practices
- Overdose prevention practices

RISKS

- Ascorbic acid or sachets with ascorbic acid can become contaminated with HIV, HCV, and HBV once opened
- Transmission may occur if the same ascorbic acid source (e.g., drug solution) is contaminated with HIV, HCV, and HBV is used by more than one person
- Use of lemon juice – fresh and from plastic bottles – to dissolve drugs can lead to bacterial or fungal infection
- Drug solutions that are ‘too’ acidic and injected into the bloodstream may irritate and/or damage blood vessels

BEHAVIORS

- People who use drugs are more likely to use more acidifier than they need when using poor-quality heroin and/or when they have limited knowledge of ideal amounts of acidifiers to use when preparing a drug solution
- Use of lemon juice as acidifier is common and should be discouraged