



RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE POLICIES TO facilitate use of a sterile filter for each injection



DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES

- Pre-packaged, sterile filters that filter out most impurities from the drug solution
- Offer a sterile filter with each needle, cooker, sterile water, and alcohol swab provided
- Based on the quantity requested by clients with no limits

EDUCATE ABOUT

- Correct, single person use of filters
- The risks of:
 - not using filters
 - using makeshift filters
 - re-using and sharing filters
 - making ‘washes’ from filters

DISPOSE

- Dispose of used filters in accordance with local regulations for biomedical waste
- Offer multiple sizes of biohazard containers for safe disposal
- Offer multiple, convenient locations for safe disposal in rural, remote, and urban settings

RISKS

- Previously used filters may contain blood contaminated with HIV, HCV, and/or HBV
- Transmission may occur if filters contaminated with HIV, HCV, and HBV are used by more than one person
- Makeshift/self-made filters (e.g. cigarette filters, tampon fibres, cigarette rolling paper, cotton swabs) are not sterile, may contain debris, and may not prevent smaller particles and/or organisms such as bacteria from being drawn into syringes
- Cigarette filters may contain glass fibres that could be injected
- Filters can be colonized with bacteria when handled and/or when they contact bacteria on the surface of the skin
- Bacteria may multiply in used filters stored in damp, airtight places and lead to infection
- “Cotton fever” is a common among people who use drugs and is associated with the use of cotton filters

BEHAVIORS

- Some people do not filter their drugs because they do not want any residue left in the filter
- Large particles can be left in drug solutions when improperly prepared
- Sharing of filters is common
- Saving filters with the intention of re-using is common
- Injecting washes obtained from previously used filters is common
- Washes are not perceived as a risky sharing practice by all
- Heating of drug solution kills many bacteria and viruses but also dissolves the waxy layer on tablets that can then be injected
- Some prefer heating drug solutions even though cold drug extraction methods are recommended; injection of heated solutions can cause damage to veins