



# RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE POLICIES TO facilitate use of a sterile needle and syringe for each injection



## DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES

- Sterile needles and syringes
- Offer a sterile cooker, sterile water, filter and alcohol swab with each needle provided
- Offer a variety of brands, sizes, gauges, types and/or volumes
- Without requiring exchange of used ones
- Based on the quantity requested by clients with no limits
- Provide multiple locations and distribution through peer networks

## EDUCATE

- Correct, single person use of needles and syringes
- Different brands, sizes, gauges, types and/or volumes and correct use
- Risks of sharing and use of non-sterile supplies
- Ways to prevent overdose and transmission of HIV, HCV, HBV and other pathogens proper disposal practices to avoid accidental needle stick injuries

## DISPOSE

- Dispose used needles and syringes 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 and urban settings

## RISKS

- Previously used needles/syringes may contain blood contaminated with HIV, HCV and/or HBV
- Transmission may occur if needles/syringes contaminated with HIV, HCV and HBV are used by more than one person
- Needles/syringes used for the preparation and transfer of drugs can transmit HIV, HCV and HBV
- Injection with a previously used needle/syringe increases the risk for infection with HIV, HCV, and HBV via blood-to-blood contact
- Injection-related harms are common among people who inject drugs (e.g., abscesses, thrombosis, bruising)
- Re-use of needles/syringes can lead to bacterial infections, skin and vein damage
- The places where people inject into their bodies can increase or decrease the chances of vein damage, injury, and infection.
- Vein damage and infections can lead people to inject into riskier sites on the body.

## BEHAVIORS

- Unstable housing, sex work, young age and belonging to marginalized populations (including Indigenous, LGBTQ2SQ+, and street involved), increases risk behaviours and the chance of becoming infected with HIV and/or HCV
- Backloading or squirting drug solution from one syringe to another, longer injecting careers, crack or cocaine injecting and frequent or 'binge' injecting are associated with increased risk of HIV and HCV transmission
- Rates of needle sharing, borrowing and lending have varied over time
- Sharing injection equipment is associated with higher risk of HIV and HCV transmission
- Injecting in public spaces creates barriers for maintaining safe injecting practices
- Difficulty accessing sterile equipment, particularly in nonurban regions, increases syringe sharing