

## IF YOU MISS YOUR SHOT:

Soak the spot in warm water or put a heating pad on it for a while. Heat helps blood circulation and may help disperse the shot back into the bloodstream. This helps in preventing an abscess forming. Drink lots of water.

Also, don't apply oil or creams to the site (such as Hirudoid) until the wound has started to close— wait an hour or so. Applying creams too soon can cause infections and scarring.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Vein collapse can occur as a consequence of long term injecting. Repeated injections, specially with blunt needles, poor technique and substances that irritate veins encourage vein collapse also.

Permanent vein blockage results from scar tissue forming in the veins (Formed from blood clots).

You should never inject into a blood vessel that you can feel a pulse from (this is an artery, which is too dangerous to inject— it can be fatal).

Arms are the safest for injecting.

Always inject with the blood flow (towards the heart).

Introduce and remove needles slowly.

**ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS!!** Clean your injecting site and equipment (Like spoons) with swabs and **NEVER SHARE.**



**WASUA; WA's DRUG USER ORGANISATION**

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**WASUA does not endorse or promote drug use.**

All drug use has attendant harms associated with it. This resource is not intended for general distribution and is designed to reduce the degree of harm experienced by those already participating in IV drug use.

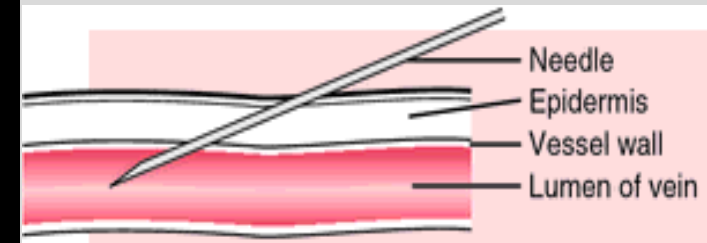
**WASUA**  
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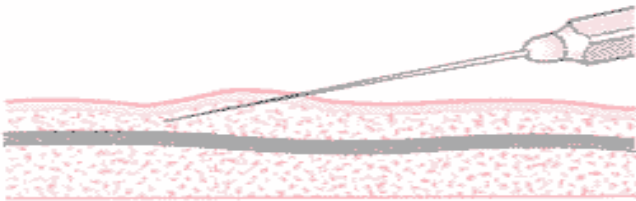
## Save your veins!

### Good Injecting Technique:

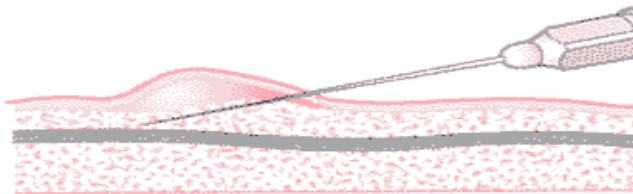
- ⇒ Protects your veins
- ⇒ Saves your shot
- ⇒ Prevents track marks and bruising
- ⇒ Prevents abscesses



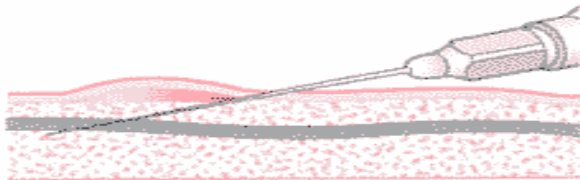
**Call WASUA for advice on Tel: (08) 9325 8387**



Needle did not enter vein



Needle entered vein and slipped out again



Needle went right through the vein

It's best to get the angle of the needle as close to 45 degrees as possible (like the picture above).

The more straight down you point the needle, the greater the chance it will go straight through the vein.

Insert the needle at a gentle angle, so that it is gentle on your veins.

## ABSCESSES HERES HOW THEY HAPPEN.....

When you miss the vein, you lose the shot. But that's not the only problem. A missed shot can get infected and cause an abscess at the site. Getting the shot right by using good injecting technique saves a lot more than just your drugs!

### SIGNS YOU HAVE AN ABSCESS:

- ◆ Raised skin surface (A lump)
- ◆ Localised heat at the site
- ◆ Tenderness and pain
- ◆ Redness of the skin
- ◆ Pus formation
- ◆ A bad smell if it has begun to discharge

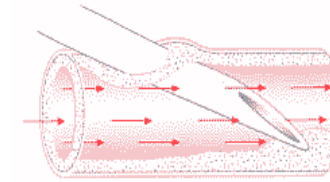
If you think you might have an abscess, seek medical attention ASAP (such as your GP or the WASUA clinic nurse).

### SO WHATS A 'MISSED SHOT'?

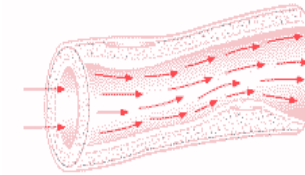
A missed shot is a phrase used to describe a swelling which appears at the injection site during or right after a shot. Fluid enters the tissue surrounding the vein because the needle has:

- ◆ Not entered the vein properly
- ◆ Entered the vein and slipped out again
- ◆ Entered the vein and gone through the opposite wall.

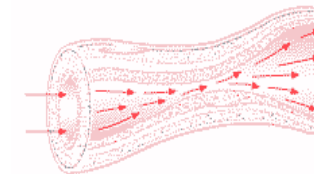
Give your spot a rest after you have used it a couple of times. It needs a chance to heal. Hitting the same spot over and over will make the vein collapse and block up permanently with scar tissue. Remember: the more you look after your veins the healthier they will be and the easier they will be to use.



1. Injection damages the inside lining of the vein – repeated injection at the same site increases the likelihood of problems.



2. Clots form in the turbulent blood around the site.



3. As the vein becomes narrower the turbulence increases and clots form more quickly.



4. Finally, the sides of the vein heal together and the vein collapses as the scar tissue draws the sides together.

Having a good shot is a skill. You learn by doing. A lot of the time you can't see your veins so you go by the feel of it.

Go SLOWLY! Injecting into a vein can be difficult and risky, there's not much point doing it if you miss and waste your drug!

Using a tourniquet or a tie can really help it – it stops your vein rolling and makes it bulge a little so it is easier to find. But once you find a vein, loosen or remove the tourniquet before having your shot, you can make the vein collapse otherwise.