Using Wheel Filters for Pills

Crushing and injecting pharmaceutical opioid tablets like oxycodone and hydromorphone can be a risky procedure, sometimes leading to lung problems, vein damage, necrosis of fingers and toes (“pharma frostbite”), heart problems and even death.

Pills were manufactured to be swallowed, and any unintended use, like injection, carries risks. However, using a wheel filter can reduce these risks significantly. If you’re going to inject, the following guide is our recommended method for using wheel filters.

1. **What You Need**
   You will need: a wheel filter, sterile water, alcohol swabs, a soup spoon, a teaspoon or other small spoon, cotton wool, two 3ml or 5ml barrels with luer screw tops (one for mixing, one for injecting), one blunt (drawing up needle), at least one sharp (injecting needle).

2. **Wash and Swab**
   Wash and dry your hands, then swab them with an alcohol swab. Once your hands have dried, swab your spoon. Place your pill between the leaves of a fresh alcohol swab. Gently rub away the pill coating (which is dangerous when injected). Most pills will change colour to white or off-white when the coating is removed. Some people use masking tape instead.

3. **Crush**
   Place the pill in the soup spoon. Use the back of the teaspoon to crush the tablet. Gently and carefully, press your thumb on the bowl of the teaspoon to grind in a gentle circular motion.

4. **Mix**
   Add a few drops of sterile water into the spoon and stir carefully with the handle of the barrel plunger until you form a paste. Continue adding water slowly, stirring constantly, until you have a milky liquid with no large particles, thin enough to draw into your barrel.

5. **Prime the Filter**
   Open the packet containing the wheel filter, but keep the filter inside the packet. Don’t touch the filter itself. Add 3 or 4 drops of sterile water in the central hole of the filter. This will lubricate the filter and make it easier to use.

6. **Cotton Wool**
   Pinch a small amount of cotton from the centre of the cotton wool. Roll it into a tight ball (the tighter, the better), about the size of your little fingernail. Place the ball in the spoon.

7. **Draw up Mix**
   Draw up the mix through the cotton wool into a new barrel. This coarse filter will remove the largest particles from the mix and make the wheel filter more effective.

8. **Attach Filter**
   Screw the tip of the barrel onto the top of the filter. If the barrel has a slip-tip instead of a luer lock, push it into the top of the filter. But be careful: pressure build-up can force the tip off the filter and spray your mix everywhere.

9. **Attach Blunt**
   Remove the filter from its packet and attach a blunt (a drawing needle) to the bottom of the filter.

10. **Filtering**
    Unwrap a new barrel and insert the blunt well inside it. Slowly push the plunger to run the mix through the filter into the second barrel. Some people draw up another 1/2 ml of water and flush through the filter; others flush air through the filter to force through the last of the mix.

11. **Attach Tip**
    Unpeel a sharp (an injecting needle) but don’t remove it from the packet. Instead, pinch the packet and attach the sharp to the second barrel.

12. **Finished Fit**
    The mix in the barrel will be clear, but it will contain the active ingredient.