

## If you miss a 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.

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 with the following can encourage vein collapse:

- blunt needles
- poor technique
- and substances that irritate veins

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 (i.e. spoons) with swabs and

**NEVER SHARE!**

## Remember

The more you look after your veins the healthier they will be and the easier they will be to use.

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.

## Peer Based Harm Reduction WA

### Opening Hours

#### Perth NSEP

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Friday

10am - 5pm  
Thursday

10am - 8pm  
Saturday & Sunday

1pm - 4pm

#### Bunbury NSEP

Monday to Friday

10am - 2pm

#### South West Mobile NSEP

(Please ring for timetable)  
0418 739 372



peer based  
harm reduction wa

# Save your Veins



#### PERTH

22/7 Aberdeen Street  
P: (08) 9325 8387  
F: (08) 9325 6152

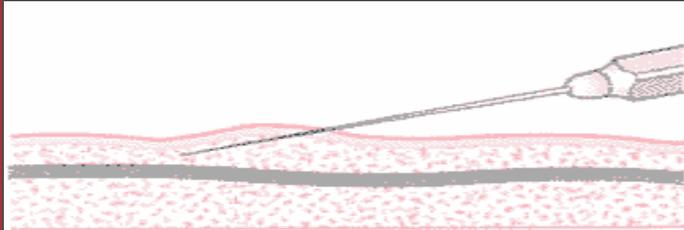
#### BUNBURY

97 Spencer Street  
P: (08) 9791 6699  
F: (08) 9721 1547

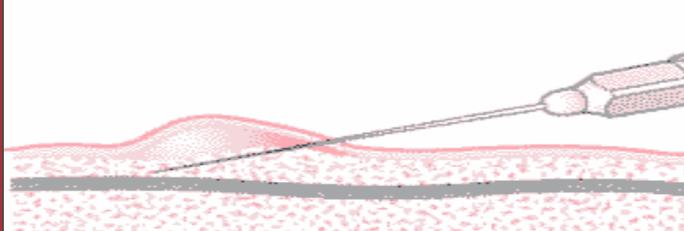
info@harmreductionwa.org  
www.harmreductionwa.org

## SAVE YOU VEINS

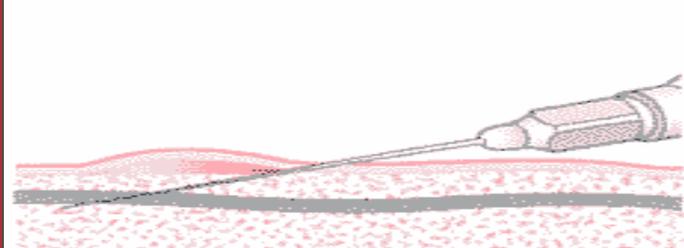
It's best to get the angle of the needle as close to 45 degrees as possible (like the picture below.)



Needle did not enter vein



Needle entered vein and slipped out again



Needle went right through the vein

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.

## HOW ABSCESSES 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

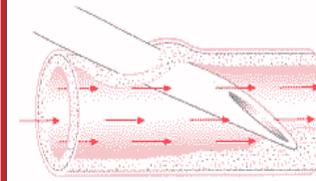
If you think you might have an abscess, seek medical attention ASAP (such as your GP or the Peer Based Harm Reduction WA clinic nurse).

### SO WHAT'S A 'MISSED SHOT'?

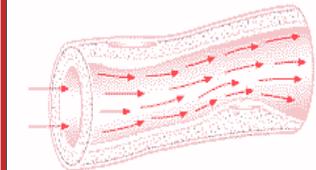
A missed shot is a phrase used to describe a swelling which appears at the injection site during or right after a shot. Fluid enters the tissue surrounding the vein because the needle has:

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

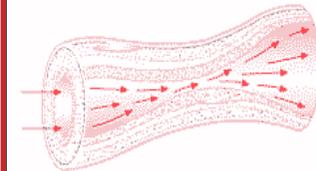
Having a good shot is a skill. You learn by doing. A lot of the time you can't see your veins so you go by the feel of it.



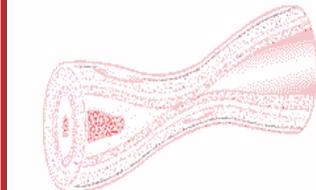
1. Injection damages the inside lining of the vein – repeated injection at the same site increases the likelihood of problems.



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.

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 can really help, 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.