

## How can I prevent bacterial endocarditis?

- Wash your hands before you get ready to inject so you don't accidentally wipe dirt or bacteria onto your equipment or injecting site. If you don't have running water, you can use hand sanitiser, or wipe your fingers with a swab to clean them.
- Use sterile equipment for every injection if possible. That means a brand new needle AND barrel AND filter that you unseal from the packet at the time of use.
- Clean the space where you're mixing up. If you're mixing up somewhere that you can't wipe down, use the paper bag or the box your equipment came in as a work surface. Don't forget to swab your spoon as well.
- Use a wheel filter if you are injecting pills. Swab your site before injecting. This will get rid of most bacteria on your skin which greatly lowers the chance of any of it ending up inside you.
- Take care not to contaminate your sterile equipment. Touching, licking, blowing on it or running it through a flame will just add dirt and bacteria to your needle tip.
- Avoid injecting around sores. Injecting into abscesses or infections can cause dirt and bacteria to spread throughout your body.

**All this works together to reduce your risk of harm.**

## See our nurse at our Health Clinic

Ask our staff about clinic days or call us:

Perth: 9325 8387

Southwest: 9791 6699

**Our Nurse Practitioner can support you with testing and treatment for STI's, blood borne viruses, and injecting-related issues.**

Our free health clinic is a judgement-free place where you can be yourself and speak openly about any issues you may have.

**No appointment is necessary.**



## Peer Based Harm Reduction WA Opening Hours

### Perth NSEP

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Friday

10am to 5pm

Thursday

10am to 8pm

Saturday & Sunday

1pm to 4pm

### Bunbury NSEP

Monday to Friday

10am to 3pm

Saturday

10am to 12.30pm

### South West Mobile NSEP

(Please ring for timetable)

**0418 739 372**



peer based  
harm reduction wa

# Bacterial Endocarditis



### PERTH

**22/7 Aberdeen Street**

**P: (08) 9325 8387**

**F: (08) 9325 6152**

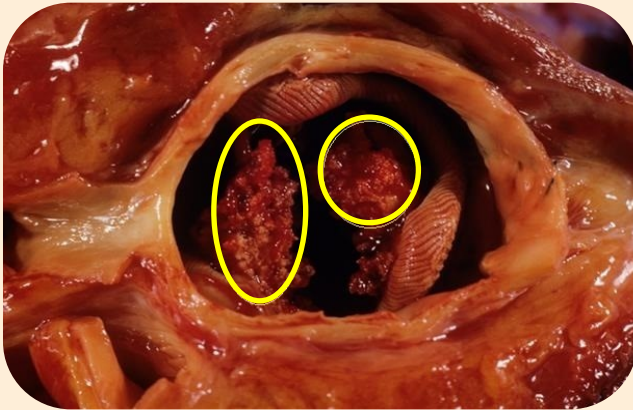
### BUNBURY

**97 Spencer Street**

**P: (08) 9791 6699**

[info@harmreductionwa.org](mailto:info@harmreductionwa.org)

[www.harmreductionwa.org](http://www.harmreductionwa.org)



## What is Endocarditis?

Endocarditis is an infection of the inner lining of your heart chambers and valves.

**It can occur when dirt and bacteria are introduced through your skin. This can lead to infections inside your body.**

**The bacteria can stick in the lining of your heart or around its valves and grow there.**

### How do you get it?

You *can* get endocarditis from surgery or untreated dental infections, but the main reason people who inject drugs get the infection is from **not using sterile injecting equipment or not swabbing their injection site properly.**

A lot of people reuse their own needles, barrels, filters and spoons, but no matter how you wash them they will never be sterile again and you run a greater risk of introducing bacteria into your body.

## There are TWO TYPES of Endocarditis

The first type is called

### Acute Endocarditis.

It comes on fast, with symptoms including high temperature, fast heart beat, and exhaustion. It makes you feel very tired, very quickly, for no reason. You may be aching in your bones and breathing more heavily than normal.

**If left untreated it can cause severe damage to your heart, and can kill quickly.**

The second type is called

### Subacute Endocarditis.

It comes on much slower over weeks or months. You may feel symptoms like being tired for no reason, recurring fevers and chills, your heart beating faster than normal, heavy breathing, weight loss and be sweating more than usual.

**If left untreated, endocarditis can cause serious damage to the heart and can be fatal.**

If infective endocarditis is not treated, small clumps of bacteria can break free and spread through your blood to grow in your lungs, brain, or other organs. These clumps can cause strokes, and untreated endocarditis can permanently damage your kidneys.

**The earlier you get medical attention the better the outcome.**

## Testing & Treatment

To find out if you have endocarditis, seek medical help and a doctor will perform the appropriate tests.

If detected early, a few weeks of IV antibiotics through a drip in hospital will usually clear the infection. Surgery may be required if the heart valve has been damaged enough to need repair or replacement.



See PBHRWA “**Guide to Safer Injection**” and “**Injection Infection**” resources for more information on avoiding bacterial infections .



<http://harmreductionwa.org/resources/>