

# Injection zones

## AVOID HEAD & NECK

There are major nerves and arteries in the neck. Injuries or infections here can be very dangerous.

## ARMS

Use surface veins in arms if they are in good shape. Rotate sites regularly.

## AVOID THE WRISTS

Nerves, veins & arteries are all close together in the wrists. Shooting up here is dangerous.

## HANDS & FEET

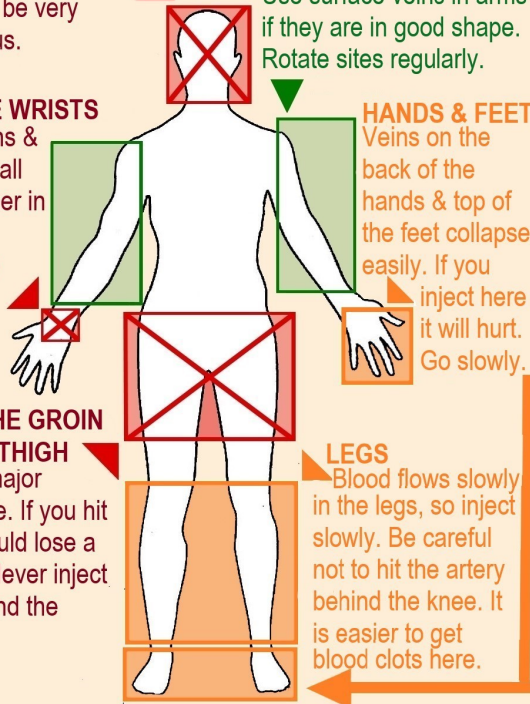
Veins on the back of the hands & top of the feet collapse easily. If you inject here it will hurt. Go slowly.

## AVOID THE GROIN & INNER THIGH

There are major arteries here. If you hit one, you could lose a leg or die. Never inject into or around the genitals.

## LEGS

Blood flows slowly in the legs, so inject slowly. Be careful not to hit the artery behind the knee. It is easier to get blood clots here.



# OPENING HOURS

## PERTH

Unit 22 / 7 Aberdeen St, Perth 6000

P: 9325 8387

Monday to Friday: 10am - 5pm

Saturday & Sunday: 1pm - 4pm

## HEALTH CLINIC (PERTH)

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

10am-3pm

No appointment necessary

## BUNBURY

97 Spencer St, Bunbury 6230

P: 9791 6699

Monday to Friday: 10am - 2pm

For the **Southwest Mobile NSEP**  
**Timetable**, call 9791 6699

## HEALTH CLINIC (BUNBURY)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10am—2pm

No appointment necessary

Visit our website for more information and resources:

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



# FINDING VEINS



## How to find them

## Where to find them



# How can we help you?

Our NSEP workers are always available to discuss your vein care needs. Got a question? Ask us! Our in-house health clinic is also at your disposal for any issues you may have around vein care as well as basic wound care, BBV and STI testing and treatment. Our nurse practitioner is friendly and approachable and no identification or appointment is required.



## Two things to consider before you start



### Are you hydrated?

When your body is properly hydrated blood pumps through your veins more readily, making those veins larger and

easier to see. On the other hand, it will be more difficult to locate a vein on someone who is moderately to severely dehydrated. To make the most of this, try and plan ahead to be properly hydrated by the time you are ready to inject.

**Best case scenario: Drink one to four glasses of water about an hour before you plan to have your shot.**



### Are you cold?

Warmth is your friend! Warmth will cause your veins to dilate and grow, making them easier to find. For best results, warm up your injection site and your entire body before injecting. Try a hot drink or a warm shower. If you have been out in the cold, put on a jumper

and give yourself a chance to warm up first.

To warm your injection site, try a hot pack or microwave a damp towel for 15—30 seconds and wrap the warm towel around the vein. You can even try warming the area gently with a hair dryer or running it directly under warm water.

**Take care not to burn yourself!**

### And remember...

If you rotate your injection sites your veins will last longer. Try to cycle between three different sites so that each individual site has a chance to heal before you use it again. It is a good idea to learn how to inject with either hand so that if the veins on one side of your body need a rest or are otherwise unusable, you're able to inject into the veins on the other side of your body.

Vitamin e oil applied daily after a shower to all of your injection sites will reduce scarring.

After your shot, apply pressure and when your injection site has stopped bleeding, apply Hirudoid to help reduce bruising. Hirudoid is better for bruising than for scarring.

## Hierarchy of safety for choosing injection sites

The following is a breakdown of possible intravenous injection sites, beginning with the safer options and moving toward the least safe ones.

**ARMS:** Arms, upper and lower, are the safer sites for injecting.



**HANDS:** Hands are somewhat less safe than arms because the veins are significantly smaller and more delicate and therefore more likely to bruise or collapse. Circulation is also slower in the hands, causing healing to take longer. If you're injecting in your hands, be sure to use the thinnest needle possible.



**LEGS:** Circulation in the legs may be poor. Veins in the legs are more likely than those in the arms to develop clots that can obstruct circulation and eventually break off and lodge in the lungs or heart. Also, damaging the valves in the leg veins is more serious than damaging those in the arms since they play a greater role in getting blood back to the heart.



**FEET:** The veins in the feet are generally smaller than in other parts of the body, and close to nerves, cartilage, and tendons which you want to avoid hitting when you inject. Because they are farther from the heart than the veins in the hands, arms, and legs, blood circulates more slowly in the foot veins and they therefore require more time for healing and repair.



## The truth about tourniquets

If you use one correctly, a tourniquet will make your veins considerably easier to see and inject into. But that's only if you use a tourniquet in the right way.

### How tight?

The whole point is to let blood in (through your arteries), but stop it leaving (through your veins). A lot of times, people tourniquet too tightly. Too much pressure and no extra blood can get into the arm. The basic idea is to increase blood pressure by letting blood in, then stopping it getting out. To do this, you only really need a small amount of pressure.



### Tip...

Try using **centrifugal force**.

Extend your injecting arm out to your side and swing it in circles for 20—30 seconds. Centrifugal force will cause blood to rush into the arm as it spins and if done only a few minutes before, the blood should enhance the appearance of the vein long enough to inject. Do this **before** you put on your tourniquet.

Also, if you are injecting into your arm, try pumping up your veins by opening and closing your fist.

