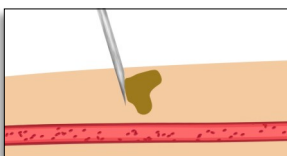


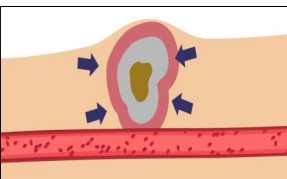
HOW AN ABSCESS FORMS

The biggest problem with abscesses is that people tend to ignore them until they get too messy, hoping they will go away. It is easy to treat an abscess, but if left untreated you could end up losing your limb, or your life. The earlier you seek medical attention the easier it will be to treat and the less damage it will do to your body.

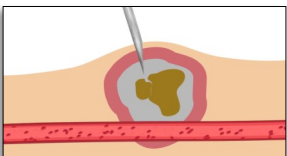
Injection misses the vein and leaves bacteria in the tissue under the skin.



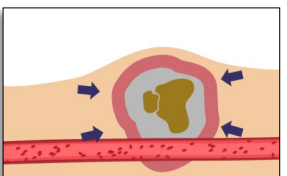
White blood cells attack the bacteria but can't eliminate it. Dead white blood cells sit around the infection (pus) and a wall is formed by your body to hold the pus in.



Repeated injections in the same area can aggravate the infection and make it bigger, harder to heal, and more dangerous.



Since the body can't kill the infection as quickly as it grows, the abscess becomes bigger and bacteria can spread to infect your heart and other organs.



OUR NURSE CAN HELP

Our free Health Clinic can support you with any injection infection issues you may have. You don't need an appointment, but call us before you visit to make sure our Nurse is available!

FIND US IN PERTH:

Suite 22 / 7 Aberdeen St

Phone: (08) 9325 8387

Mon - Fri: 10am to 5pm

Sat - Sun: 1pm to 4pm

Closed on public holidays!



PERTH MAP

FIND US IN BUNBURY:

97 Spencer Street

Phone: (08) 9791 6699

Mon - Fri: 10am to 3pm

Sat - Sun: closed

Closed on public holidays!



BUNBURY MAP

INJECTION INFECTION



HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

It's not about being clean or dirty. There are always bacteria living on our skin and on the surface of objects without causing us any problems. However, when you inject, you can accidentally push bacteria through your skin with the needle. It can grow and spread inside your body, leading to systemic infections that can be life-threatening.

The good news is that you can reduce your risk of these complications by incorporating the following simple practices into your injecting routine. By addressing these factors now, you could end up saving yourself a lot of time and trouble later. It's never too late to change the way you do things.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

SOAP AND WATER

Wash your hands, fingers and injection site with soap and water (and wash them *after* injecting as well to reduce the risk of spreading blood-borne viruses).

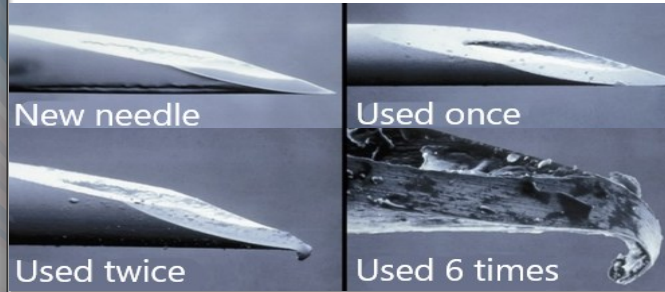
Where possible, try to make sure the area you mix up in is also clean.

If you don't have access to soap and water you can use hand sanitizer or even alcohol swabs.

If someone is assisting you to inject, ask them to wash their hands before and after you allow them to help.

STERILE EQUIPMENT

Do use sterile equipment—Fits, spoons, water sources, and filters. Blunt needles cause more damage to your veins!



DON'T RE-USE

Don't re-use injecting equipment. Bacteria live and grow inside a used needle or syringe and can cause infection if re-used.

If you think you may have to re-use your syringe again later and you can't avoid it, rinse it several times with cold tap water immediately after use.

SWAB EFFECTIVELY

You will need a minimum of two swabs to effectively clean your site before injecting. Gently agitate the first swab over your injection site to loosen the dirt and germs. Then use the second swab to wipe across your site in one direction, pushing the dirt and germs to one side like a squeegee.

Allow the wetness to dry. Don't wipe it afterward or blow on it to make it dry faster. The alcohol in the swab needs to evaporate to kill the bacteria and sterilize the site.

ALWAYS FILTER

Not filtering your mix can expose you to a variety of harms. You could inject particles that can block veins and damage your heart or lungs. You could also let bacteria or fungal spores enter your blood stream.

If you don't filter, a missed shot is more likely to lead to an infection such as cellulitis or an abscess.

MONITOR AND MANAGE

If allowed to grow unchecked, an abscess will spread bacteria into the bloodstream and may cause infections in your heart and other organs.

If you notice a lump after injecting, apply a warm compress and elevate the area. A missed shot will go down within a day. An infected abscess will not.

If the lump is red or feels hot, it may be infected. Draw a line with a pen around the redness. If the redness grows beyond the line, the infection may be spreading. Seek medical treatment promptly.

If you experience fever, chills, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, or pain associated with an abscess, seek medical attention immediately as this could be a blood infection.

Pain or swelling in the groin or armpits may also mean you have an infection and you should seek medical treatment.