

Groundswell

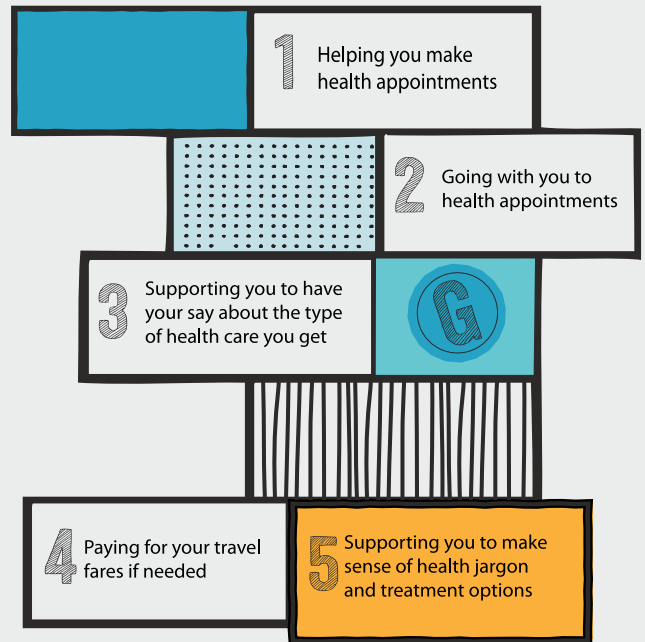
Out of homelessness



Action update Safer injecting

Trust for London
Tackling poverty and inequality

Need help to see a doctor or dentist in London?
Health Peer Advocates will help you get your
health problems sorted by:



Health Peer Advocates all have personal experience of homelessness and have been trained by Groundswell. Call us to see if we work in your area.

@ItsGroundswell 03000 039 600 info@groundswell.org.uk

What is an Action update?

At Groundswells we support people that are experiencing homelessness to attend over 3000 Health appointments a year. Each month our Action Update highlights a topic which people told us is important to them and offers practical advice around that issue.

Top tips on Safer Injecting ...

- 1 Always use an unused needle. Never share a needle.
- 2 Avoid using the same injecting site repeatedly
- 3 Always Inject in the direction of the heart
- 4 Watch for the signs of overdose

What we heard and saw....

We spoke to our Health Peer Advocates and Clients and this is what they told us:

“ I'm looking for the arrows sign in the window all the time to get clean pins ”

“ It's really hard to stop. But it is best to be safe ”

“ Once your veins are damaged it takes a long time to heal ”

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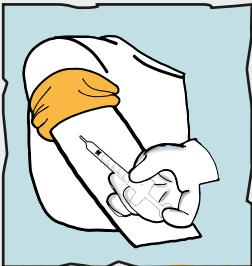
Action update: Safer injecting

Reducing risks when injecting

Try not to use alone. When injecting remember to wash your hands first. Don't lick the needle as bacteria from your mouth can get on the needle.

Always inject yourself. Take your time. Rushing can mean you make a mistake. If the injection site is sore then choose another area. Always use a clean needle.

Do not swab the area after injecting, just apply pressure.



Needle exchange

Look out for the red and green arrow logo on pharmacy windows where you can get free needle exchange. Ask in your pharmacy needle exchange for syringe markers/ID syringes. Get your own needles and equipment from your local needle exchange.

Never share needles or other equipment with another drug user not even your partner, boyfriend or girlfriend.

Vein damage

The main ways that veins are damaged is by repeatedly using the same place (site) for injecting and flushing after injecting. Flushing (pulling back blood into the syringe and reinjecting) does not give an extra buzz and increases the risk of blood clots.

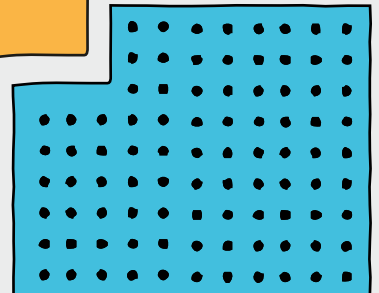
Injecting tablet or using too much caustic soda will also damage your veins. Don't use vinegar, lemon or bottled water as they may have contaminants in them.

Always inject in the direction of the heart. Repeatedly using the same needle will blunt the tip and cause damage to your veins so always use a new needle.



Overdose

If someone does not come round after 3 minutes or is breathing erratically or is starting to turn blue (this normally starts with the lips), assume they are overdosing and dial 999 straight away, remember don't panic stay calm!



Useful Resources

The Safer Injecting Handbook: <http://www.exchangesupplies.org/pdf/P303.pdf>

Talk to Frank – Friendly, Confidential Drugs Advice: www.talktofrank.com 0300 123 6600

Drugs.ie - Irish website with Drug and Alcohol Information and Support: www.drugs.ie



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