

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Veins take time to heal just like any wound on your body. Some important ways to reduce the harm to your veins are:

Wash your hands.

Use hand sanitizer or use swabs to clean your fingers.

Swab the injecting site.

Remember to use a swipe motion in one direction.

Use a tourniquet.

Apply and tighten your tourniquet, remember to loosen before injecting.

Always inject towards your heart.

The same direction as the blood flow.

Inject at a 45 degree angle.

Put the needle into the vein at an angle (no more than 45 degrees) with the hole/eye facing upwards. This helps to stop you going through the vein

Pull back the plunger.

This allows you to see if you are in the vein. If no blood appears you are not in the vein. If blood is bright red or gushing, you may have hit an artery. In both cases, pull out the needle and apply pressure with cotton wool or tissue.



SAVE YOUR VEINS



CONTACT US



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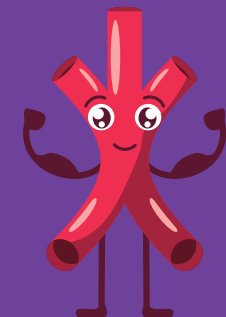
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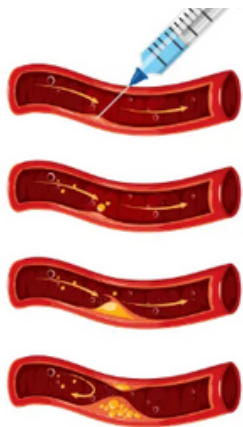


WHERE DID MY VEINS GO?

Our veins can be easily damaged through injecting. Using the same spot every time, blunt or barbed needles and substances can cause damage to the veins.

When the vein is constantly damaged or irritated it becomes swollen. This creates clotting inside the walls of the vein and it can eventually it heals shut or "collapses".

Collapsed veins occur after repeated injury to the vein without enough time to heal.



Injecting drugs irritates the inside walls of the vein

Blood clots form near the irritation

The vein becomes narrower and clots form more quickly

Scar tissue develops and the walls of the vein heal shut

HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR VEIN HAS COLLAPSED?

If you try use a collapsed vein and draw back there will be no blood as collapsed veins can cause circulation issues in the arms and legs.

Symptoms may include:

- Itching
- Tingling
- Cold feet
- Numbness
- Swelling

If your having trouble finding a vein you usually use it's likely that vein has collapsed.

SAFER INJECTING

It's best to get the angle of less than 45 degrees and eye/hole facing up. Insert the needle at a gentle angle so your gentle on your veins.

The more straight down you point the needle, them more change you have to go through or "blow out" the vein.

Needle did not enter the vein



Needle entered the vein and slipped out again



Needle went right through the vein



HARM REDUCTION TIP:

GO SLOWLY & USE A TORNIQUET

Go in slowly, this will help make sure you get the vein properly.

Using a tourniquet can help it stops the veins from rolling. It can also help makes veins bulge and easier to find. Once you find the vein loosen or remove the tourniquet before having your shot. If you don't loosen the tourniquet or you could damage or collapse the vein.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISS A SHOT

Use a heat pad or a warm damp towel. The heat will help increase blood flow to the area and help reduce the risk of an abscess. The increased blood flow may also help distribute the drug back into the blood stream.

Wait a few hours before applying any creams (e.g. Hirudoid), oils, or lotions to the injection site. When applied too soon after a missed shot, these substances can increase the risk of infection.

LOOK FOR SIGNS OF AN ABSCESS

When you miss the vein, you lose the shot into the layers of skin. This can become infected and cause and abscess at the site. Keep an eye on the area over the next few days

SIGNS OF AN ABSCESS

- Raised skin surface (a lump)
- Warm or hot to the touch
- Tenderness or pain at the site
- 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 a GP or street doctor).

SEPTICEMIA

It's important to **never inject through an abscess**. This can cause the infection in the abscess to enter the blood stream and spread. This is known as Septicemia (blood poisoning) and is a life threatening condition if untreated. It may lead to sepsis which can cause organ damage, failure or death.

SIGNS OF SEPTICEMIA

- High fever
- Chills
- Weakness
- Sweating
- Drop in blood pressure