

NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

PRESS RELEASE

October 2014

HIV, Hepatitis and Drug Abuse
Preventing Infection among People Who Inject Drugs

(Newark, NJ) – Although HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is primarily spread through sexual contact, there are other ways the virus can be transmitted. Those who inject drugs are at high risk for contracting HIV and/or hepatitis especially if sharing or reusing their “works” (needle or syringe). Blood can get passed from one person to the next if sharing works. Other equipment like cotton balls, spoons, rinse water, bottle caps, and cookers can spread HIV and/or hepatitis and therefore should never be shared or reused.

The risk of contracting and spreading HIV and hepatitis must be taken seriously. Find out if there is a needle exchange program in your area. Trade used needles for new ones. Remember, the safest thing is to use clean works every time and never to share.

Reduce risk for infection by:

- getting into a drug treatment program.
- not sharing or re-using needles and works to inject drugs
- using a latex condom correctly every time you have sex
- cleaning needles and/or works with bleach before using them
 - Clean your works with bleach and water every time. Use the 3x3 method.
 - Fill a cup with clean, cold water. Fill the syringe with water. Shake and tap it. Empty the syringe by squirting out the water down the drain or onto the ground. Do this 3 times.
 - Fill a cup with clean, straight bleach. Fill the syringe to the top with bleach. Shake and tap it for at least 30 seconds. Empty the syringe by squirting out the bleach down the drain or onto the ground. Do this 3 times.
 - Use a new, clean cup, or wash the first cup. Fill it with clean, cold water. Fill the syringe with water. Shake and tap it. Empty the syringe by squirting out the water down the drain or onto the ground. Do this 3 times.

If you do not know your HIV status, don't wait to get tested. Anyone at any age is at risk for contracting HIV and/or hepatitis especially those who inject drugs. The sooner HIV is found the sooner treatment can begin. Early testing can help find virus before symptoms show, so treatment can be started as soon as possible; helping to prevent the further spread of infection.

If you are looking to find out how to obtain free, clean needles/syringes, contact us (The New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline) either by calling [800-624-2377](tel:800-624-2377), text/email at 8006242377@njpies.org, or chat via our website at www.njhivstdline.org. We are also available to help you locate a free, state-funded testing site near you for initial testing, follow-up care or have questions about HIV/AIDS, STDs, or hepatitis. We are always here to help 24hours a day/ 7 days a week! Calls are free and confidential.

Services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year

- Referrals for testing sites and other related services
- HIV/AIDS, STD and hepatitis prevention information
- HIV counseling and treatment locations
- HIV treatment information