



UCSF Alliance Health Project

Training Program www.ucsf-ahp.org/provider-resources

Online Resources for the Basic I

How To Clean Your Rigs

Using your own, sterile works is the best protection against HIV, HBV (if you're not already vaccinated) and HCV exposure from needles. For needle exchange referrals:

North American Syringe Exchange Network
(www.nasen.org)

San Francisco AIDS Foundation's California AIDS Hotline
(800/367-AIDS)

CDC National AIDS Hotline toll free at (800/FOR-AIDS)

If you do share needles, keep in mind that using bleach is not risk free. Bleach will reduce the amount of virus, but bleach does not mean your works are sterile. It's best to use your own sterile works, including cotton, cooker, and ties. If that's not possible, disinfecting with bleach may be better than doing nothing at all.

Clean Your Needles Immediately After and Immediately Before Use

Fill the syringe with clean water and shake it up. Squirt out the water and throw it away. Repeat until you don't see any blood in the syringe. Rinse with water first because bleach first may make blood stick inside the syringe.

Completely fill the syringe with fresh, full-strength household bleach. Keep it in the syringe for 30 seconds or more. Squirt it out and throw the bleach away. Leaving the bleach in for two minutes may kill hepatitis B. It's unclear whether bleach will kill hepatitis C.

Fill the syringe with clean water that hasn't been in contact with any other syringe and shake or tap. Squirt out the water and throw it away.

- Bleach should not be diluted.
- A small amount of bleach entering the body is not likely to cause any harm.
- If you don't have any bleach, fill the syringe with clean water and shake or tap it. Squirt out the water and throw it away. Repeat several times.
- Alcohol may work to disinfect the needle. Rubbing alcohol and hard liquor can be used; but beer and wine do not contain enough alcohol.
- Hydrogen peroxide is most likely as effective as bleach. Though it may cause less harm to the needle than bleach (bleach dulls the point and breaks down the rubber plunger), it is more expensive. Also, like bleach, it degenerates over time. Probably peroxide that is older than six months should not be used.

Sources

Adapted from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, <http://www.sfaf.org/aids101/injection.html#cleaning> and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/idu/facts/disinfection.htm>.