

Injecting drugs can give you deadly infections



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Clean needles can help with safer injecting, but you can do more to protect yourself further from infections.

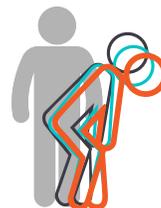
Infections from injecting drugs can lead to:



Death and grieving



Serious surgeries, like open heart surgery



Paralysis or Blindness



Long hospital stays (1+ month)

Germs can enter your body when you inject drugs, and can cause:

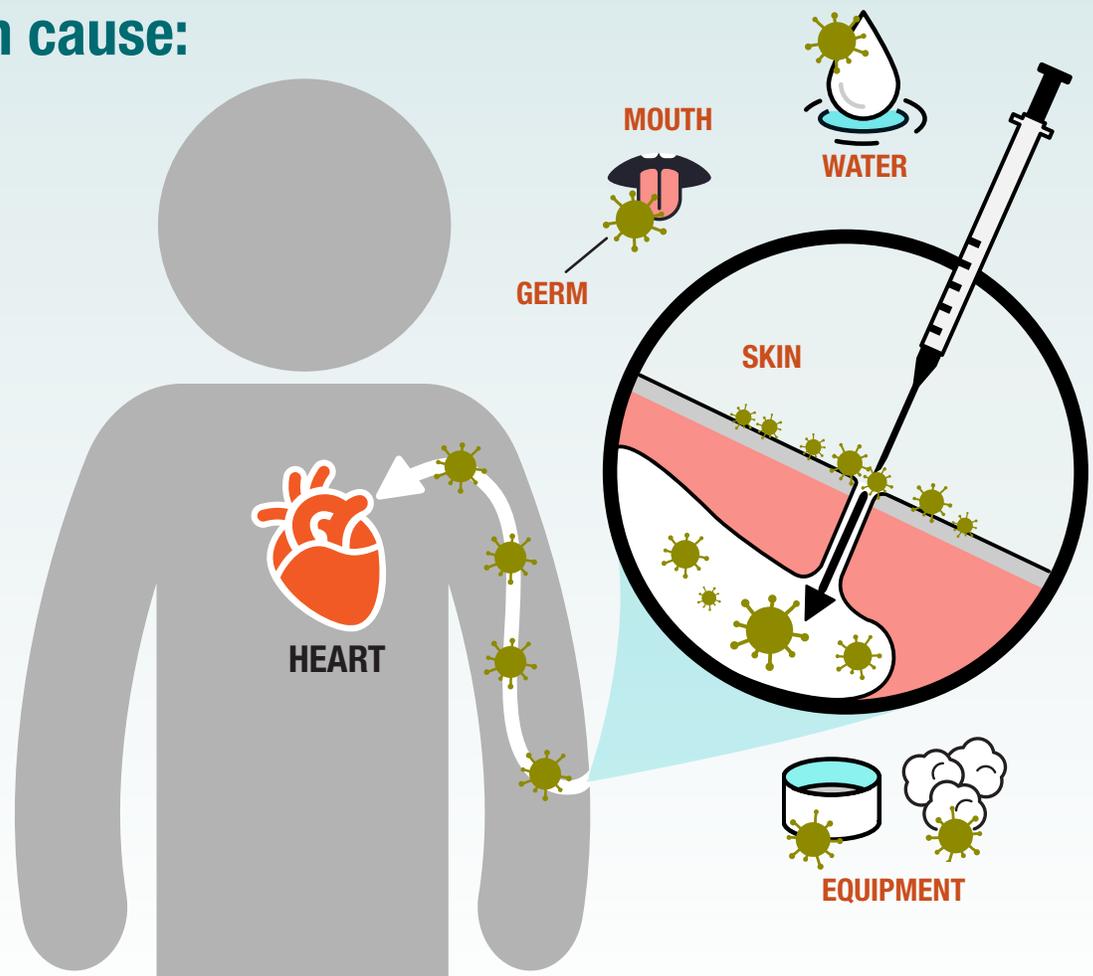
Deadly or paralyzing infections in your heart, bones, joints, spine, brain, or blood

Lifelong problems with your heart

Symptoms similar to withdrawal

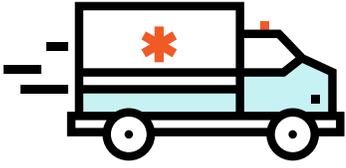
Painful skin infections, including ones filled with pus (abscesses)

Stroke



You can protect yourself from these infections.

Get medical care or go to the hospital immediately:



- If you have signs of an infection. Symptoms of infection can be similar to withdrawal. Symptoms may include a fever, dizziness, light headedness, or skin that is red, warm, or painful.
- If you have infections that keep coming back.

Use safer injection practices if you are unable or don't feel ready yet to stop injecting drugs:

SKIN



Use alcohol or soap to clean your hands and the area where you will inject. Don't lick your skin before you inject. Don't inject in an open wound or into a swollen or painful area.

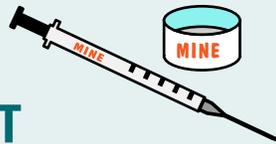
NEW

Use a new needle and equipment every time. Don't re-use injection equipment, even your own. Always use new, sterile needles, and new equipment like cookers, cottons, ties and alcohol swabs. Avoid re-using syringes even if you can attach a new needle.



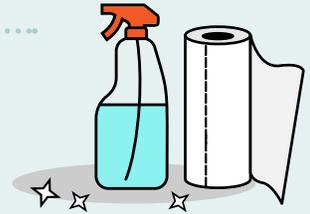
EQUIPMENT

Do not share any equipment. Don't lick the needle or use any equipment that could have germs from your saliva. Only use sterile water to fix drugs.



SURFACES

Set up a clean surface before placing down your injection equipment.



Your healthcare provider can connect you to care and resources to help stop injecting, like counseling and other support.



These services may include medication-assisted treatment, which can help with cravings for opioids. Methadone and buprenorphine are often used.