

SAFER INJECTING BASICS FOR **NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES**

NPS



THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO INFORM PEOPLE OF THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH INJECTING NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS), DRUGS COMMONLY CALLED LEGAL HIGHS OR ANY UNIDENTIFIED POWDERS.

AS YOU WILL NO DOUBT KNOW, THE BEST ADVICE IS SIMPLE, DON'T START INJECTING OR IF YOU HAVE STARTED INJECTING, TRY AN ALTERNATIVE.

Injecting any drug (including NPS) can be the most dangerous way of taking it. There is a greater risk of overdose. Injectors can develop abscesses, ulcers, infections as well as blood borne viruses like hepatitis and HIV.

However, properly following these steps could greatly reduce many of the risks and harms that come with injecting.

1. Always use clean fresh equipment for *EVERY* injection, do not store any used equipment for later use – *this can reduce injecting related injuries and infections. At a needle exchange you can get as much equipment as you need, there are no limits.*
2. Always prepare and inject your drugs in a clean, preferably sterile, safe environment – *this reduces the chance of infections and other complications.*
3. Always wash/clean your hands and injecting site before touching/using injecting equipment – *this reduces the chance of infection.*
4. Don't let other people prepare your drugs for injecting and never accept a pre-filled syringe from anyone – *this reduces all risks.*
5. Always prepare and inject a small test dose first and gauge your reaction as you may be surprised how powerful NPS are at small doses.

6. Always use the smallest thinnest needle possible – *this can reduce vein damage. Ask at your needle exchange for advice on appropriate needles.*
7. Do not share, borrow or lend any injecting equipment – *including water, spoons, filters - this can reduce your risk of getting a blood borne virus.*
8. Always use the best choice of water available to you for preparing your drugs (water for injection amps available at needle exchanges are best followed by cooled boiled water) – *this can help reduce infections.*
9. Don't use citric acid if it's not needed – most NPS do not need to be dissolved with citric – *this can help injecting sites to heal better.*
10. Always filter your drugs before injecting – *this stops tiny particles entering the blood stream and causing problems.*
11. Switch between different sites in the arms as much as possible and keep them clean – *this can allow sites to heal and may stop you moving on to riskier sites (a tourniquet may help).*
12. Know the risks of using deeper veins such as veins the groin – *groin injecting is difficult and dangerous and should be avoided.*
13. Properly dispose of your used equipment in the bin provided and take it back to the needle exchange – *this can reduce the risks to others.*
14. Speak to the staff at the exchange about any concerns or injuries you have – *they will be able to help you.*
15. Always use a suitable condom during penetrative sex – *most needle exchanges also provide free condoms.*

SOME OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INJECTING NPS



THERE ARE MANY OTHER REASONS THAT INJECTING NPS CAN BE HARMFUL:

- They can be a painful irritant to skin and tissue.
- Some NPS narrow the blood vessels which causes the blood flow to reduce and can affect healing
- When injecting NPS the effects usually don't last as long so people tend to inject more often. More injecting usually means more harm.
- Bingeing is common. This can lead to weight loss and other health problems including mental health problems – paranoia and delusions.
- Some NPS can be hallucinogenic and fast acting. This makes it difficult to safely remove the needle before the effects come on. This can lead to injury and to unpleasant hallucinations.
- Some NPS can lower inhibitions and increase sexual desire. This effect can be more marked when injecting NPS. If this is part of your use, please protect yourself and others by considering where you are using and who you are using with. Practice safe sex. Always use a suitable condom during penetrative sex.
- Packaged NPS often contain different drugs or combinations from those shown on the label. This makes it almost impossible to gauge how much to take. Even when you may think you are using the same product, what is in the packet may be different from what you had last time you used it.

ALTERNATIVES TO INJECTING

RECTAL (UP YER BUM) FACTS

- Rectal administration can be a safer method of drug administration.
- It's effective for most people; however, there are some risks.
- Overdose is still possible
- Sharing barrels could transmit blood borne viruses.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Wash hands
- Prepare the drug for injecting (remember no need for citric or heat)
- Filter
- Remove the needle
- No more than 1.5ml of fluid should be used
- Whilst squatting, gently insert the barrel until just inside the anus. The barrel needs to be inserted carefully so not to damage the delicate membranes of the anus.
- Squirt the solution slowly
- Re-wash hands

ORAL FACTS

- Using orally is effective for most NPS.
- They may take longer to come on (and not be quite as intense) but they can be much longer acting.
- There is still a serious risk of overdose, especially if you are unsure of what you have taken.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Wash hands
- Tablets should be swallowed; however there is no need to start with a full tablet. You could try a quarter or half.
- Powders can be diluted in water or soft drink. The powder could also be put inside a gel capsule or cigarette paper and swallowing (this is often called bombing).

SNORTING FACTS

- You can also snort most NPS
- Effects are usually quick to take effect and intense.
- Sharing banknotes, straws or tubes can transmit blood borne viruses
- Overdose is a risk especially if the drug is taken at the wrong dose. **Don't judge a line of NPS by a line of cocaine as the NPS may be stronger at a much smaller dose.**

HOW TO DO THIS

- Make the powder as fine as possible by crushing it using the side of a credit card or 2 spoons.
- Always make/use your own tube for snorting
- Try to make a tube that won't cut or scratch your nose lining. A piece of rolled up card is better than using money.
- Always start with a small line, some NPS are effective with lines the length of a grain of rice!





FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE DISCUSS
WITH STAFF AT THE EXCHANGE OR FIND
YOUR NEAREST DRUG SERVICE BY VISITING
WWW.SDF.ORG.UK

AUTHORS

JOHN CAMPBELL

IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (IEP SERVICES),
NHS GREATER GLASGOW & CLYDE ADDICTION SERVICES.

KATY MACLEOD

NATIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, SCOTTISH DRUGS FORUM

DESIGNED BY



GP0047_C71_01