



## Expanded Syringe Access Program

# ESAP

Syringes may be furnished or sold without a prescription to people 18 or older by: pharmacies, Article-28 regulated facilities (hospitals and nursing homes), and health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants). There is no limit on the number of syringes that may be provided.

## Injecting More Safely

If you inject drugs, you may be at risk of becoming infected with blood-borne infections including HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Injecting drugs can also lead to infections of the skin (abscesses and cellulitis) and to a life-threatening heart infection (endocarditis). Fortunately, there are ways to protect yourself with the right injection equipment and knowledge on how to use it:

- Use a new, sterile syringe every time you inject. Syringe exchange programs and pharmacies are great sources for syringes. Your health care provider may also be able to help you.
- Don't share or reuse syringes or other injection supplies, including needles (if they come separate from the syringes), cookers, filters (such as cotton pellets), and water used for mixing your drugs.
- Clean your injection site with soapy water or with rubbing alcohol (single-use swabs or wipes work well for this).
- Avoid injecting in the same spot repeatedly.
- Use a tourniquet to plump up your veins before injecting.
- Keep the beveled or angled end of the needle upwards, if you can see it.
- Take your time injecting. If you rush things, you may “miss your shot” and not get the drugs in your vein.

- If you don't have a new syringe and need to inject before you can get one, take the following steps to reduce your risk of infection:
  1. Fill the syringe with clean water that is room temperature or colder; shake to remove all the blood; and then squirt out water.
  2. Fill the syringe with full-strength bleach; shake it for 30 seconds; and then squirt out the bleach.
  3. Fill the syringe with clean water (not the water you used in Step 1); and squirt it out.

## HIV and Hepatitis

**Get tested.** If you're infected, you can learn how to stay that way and keep your partners safe. If you're not infected, treatments can keep you healthy. Speak with your health care provider or contact your local health department for more information.

**Stopping the spread of HIV with medication:** If you are not infected, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) can keep you that way. If you have already been exposed to HIV through contact with a sex or drug-sharing partner, Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) can keep you healthy. If you are already infected, you can keep your partners from getting sick by staying on your HIV medications.

**Condoms:** HIV, hepatitis B, and other diseases may be spread through unprotected sex. If you're having sex, use a male latex condom, or a female condom every time.

## Understanding Opioids and Overdose

### What are opioids?

They are a class of drugs that includes heroin, fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone (Percocet™, Oxycontin™), hydrocodone (Vicodin™), and hydrocodone (Vicodin™).

### What is an opioid overdose?

It is a life-threatening condition that results from taking more of an opioid than the body can handle. Breathing becomes shallow and may stop, robbing the brain and other organs of oxygen needed to survive. Some untreated overdoses are fatal.

### What increases risk for an opioid overdose?

**Fentanyl:** This synthetic opioid is 50-100 times stronger than heroin, and even a small quantity can increase the risk for an overdose. It is widespread in the drug supply and it is frequently mixed in with many other drugs, including heroin, stimulants (cocaine and methamphetamine), and pressed pills that may look like prescribed drugs. These “non-opioid users” may not know they have taken fentanyl and are at risk for an overdose.

**Reduced tolerance:** Tolerance refers to one’s ability to handle a particular quantity of a specific substance. A drug-free period of as little as 1 or 2 days will lower one’s tolerance. Using the same amount of drug after a break as before puts you at a higher risk for an overdose.

**Mixing opioids with other drugs:** Opioids combined with other depressants, including alcohol, can make an overdose more likely. This risk is also increased if opioids are combined with benzos such as Xanax™, Klonopin™, Ativan™, and Valium™.

**Being alone:** Using alone should be **avoided** when possible, as there may not be someone around to revive you with naloxone, or to call 911.

### **If I see someone overdosing, what do I do?**

**Give naloxone:** If you have naloxone, the medication that reverses opioid overdoses, use it immediately.

**DO NOT DELAY.** You may need to administer a second dose 2-3 minutes after the first one if the person's breathing hasn't become normal. It's a good practice to always have naloxone available. You can get it in pharmacies throughout New York State and at many places in the community.

**Call 911:** Don't be afraid to get help. The New York State 911 Good Samaritan Law protects you and the overdosed person against charge and prosecution for possession of a controlled substance if you are helping someone out in an emergency.

## **Drug Dependence and Treatment**

**Regular drug use can lead to dependence.** Substance use treatment can work for those who become dependent. For dependence on opioids, that treatment may include buprenorphine or methamphetamine, both of which can help manage cravings and withdrawal, as well as reduce the risk of overdose.

## **Drug Dependence and Treatment**

### **To dispose of used syringes and needles safely:**

- 1.** Put used syringes and other “sharps” in a plastic bottle, such as a laundry detergent or bleach bottle. The bottle should be unbreakable and puncture resistant.
- 2.** Close the screw-on top tightly and label your sealed container, “Contains Sharps.”
- 3.** Don’t use coffee cans, as their plastic lids can come off easily, and don’t use glass bottles that may break.

### **Do NOT put a plastic container with used syringes out with the recyclable plastics.**

Check with your local health, sanitation, or public works department or trash collector before you dispose of used syringes and needles in your household trash.

Hospitals and nursing homes accept used syringes and needles when they are put in containers using the steps listed above. Syringe exchange programs in New York State can dispose of your used syringes, as well as provide you with new, sterile ones.

Exposed needles are dangerous. If you don’t have a puncture-resistant container, recap your needle after you use it. Don’t recap needles used by other people.

## Where to Get Help

### **Buprenorphine**

<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

### **Methadone**

<https://oasas.ny.gov/>

### **New York State Hopeline**

1-877-846-7369 or text HOPENY (467369)

<https://oasas.ny.gov/>

### **New York City**

1-888-NYC-WELL (692-9355) or text “WELL” to 988 or

<http://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us>

### **Get Naloxone**

1-800-692-8528 or [www.health.ny.gov/overdose](http://www.health.ny.gov/overdose)

### **Get New Syringes and Dispose of Used Ones**

<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

### **Your Health and Life Matter: Build a Safety Plan**

<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/9895.pdf>

### **PrEP/PEP**

<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

### **Never Use Alone Lifeline**

1-800-484-3731 or <https://neverusealone.com/>

### **New York State HIV/AIDS Information Hotline**

1-800-233-7432 English/Espanol

Deaf/TDD 1-212-925-9560

NY Relay 711 or 1-800-421-1220

### **Hepatitis C Testing, Care and Treatment**

<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

