



Sterile Syringes & Equipment

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION?



HOW DOES INJECTION DRUG USE RELATE TO HIV?

Sharing needles, syringes, or other tools/works (e.g., cookers) to inject drugs increases vulnerability to HIV and other infections, like hepatitis C virus (HCV). Sharing can transfer blood from one person to another, and blood can carry viruses like HIV and HCV. **People who inject drugs account for about 1 in 10 HIV diagnoses in the US.** About 21% of people living with HIV in the US also have HCV. Having one of these infections can make you more vulnerable to having the other.

SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Use new, clean needles and syringes every time you inject, and never share injection equipment.**
- **If you do share needles and syringes, always clean used needles and syringes with bleach.** Cleaning your needles and syringes can greatly reduce your risk for HIV and HCV.
- Bleach can't be used to clean water or cotton. **Use new, clean water and cotton each time.**
- **Take PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent getting HIV.** When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.
- **Take PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) if you think you've been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours and are not on PrEP.**
- If you are living with HIV, it's important to take your medication as prescribed. **People living with HIV who inject drugs will not transmit HIV through sex if they have an undetectable viral load.** Research also suggests that having an undetectable viral load can help prevent HIV transmission through the sharing of injection drug equipment.

If you have questions about syringe services programs and harm reduction, reach out to our team at SSP.Health@tn.gov.

WHERE CAN YOU GET STERILE SYRINGES AND EQUIPMENT?

Visit a Syringe Services Program (SSP) in Tennessee for **free sterile syringes and equipment** as well as **safe disposal** for the used supplies. They also provide many other resources such as **HIV testing, hepatitis C testing, condoms, PrEP services, and more!**

Visit tinyurl.com/TNSSSPs to find a program near you.



Combining Strategies

There are so many strategies to prevent HIV - talk to your provider and see what works best for you!

Visit tinyurl.com/TNHIVPrevention for more information on how you can prevent HIV.



Have questions? Need HIV services?
Scan the QR code to locate services or contact example@tn.gov