

# WHEN THINGS

# GO WRONG

INJECTING INJURIES  
& INFECTIONS





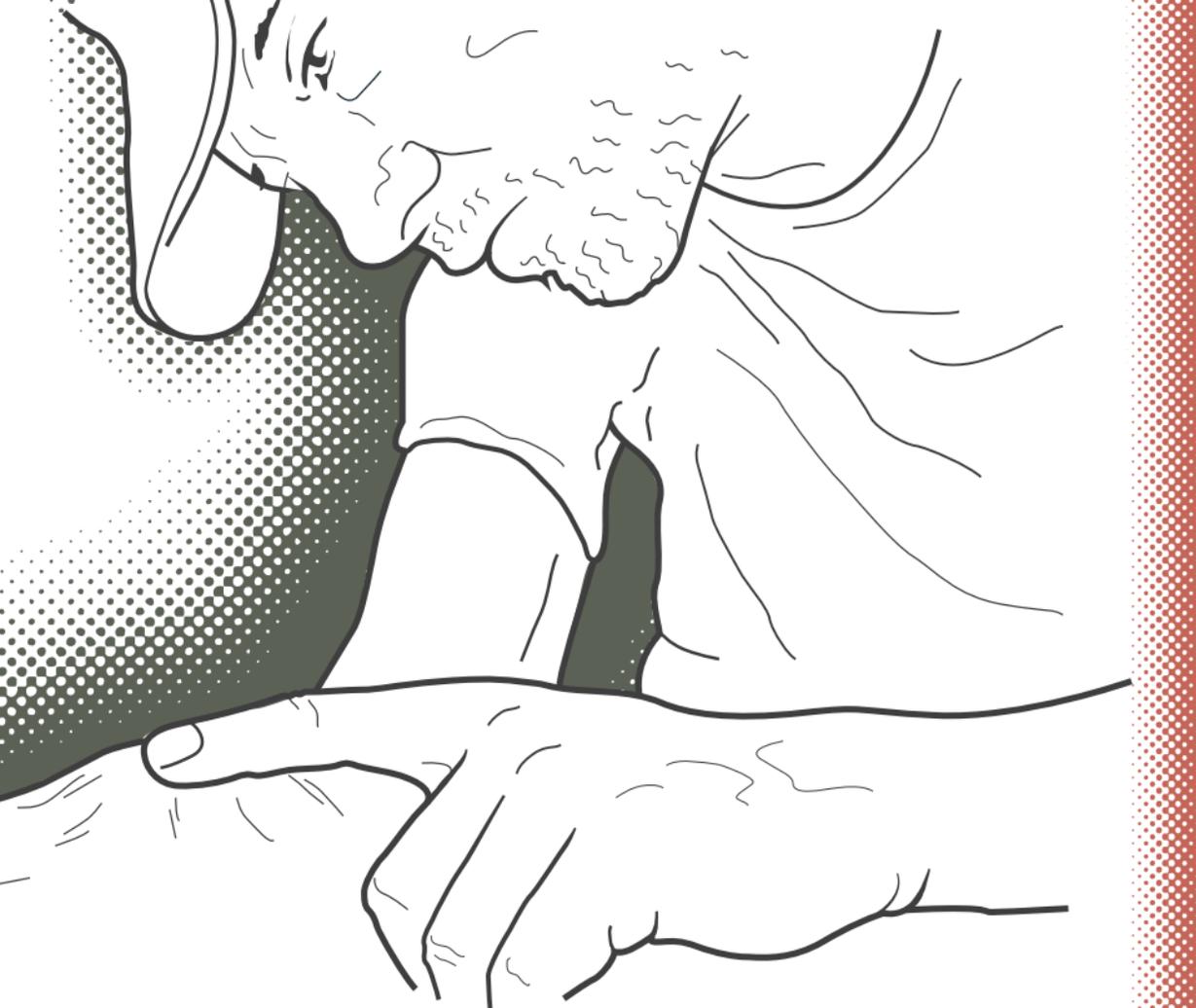
**If you inject street drugs, injuries  
and infections are part of the game.**

**This leaflet helps explain what can  
happen and what to do.**

## **Lumps & Bumps?**

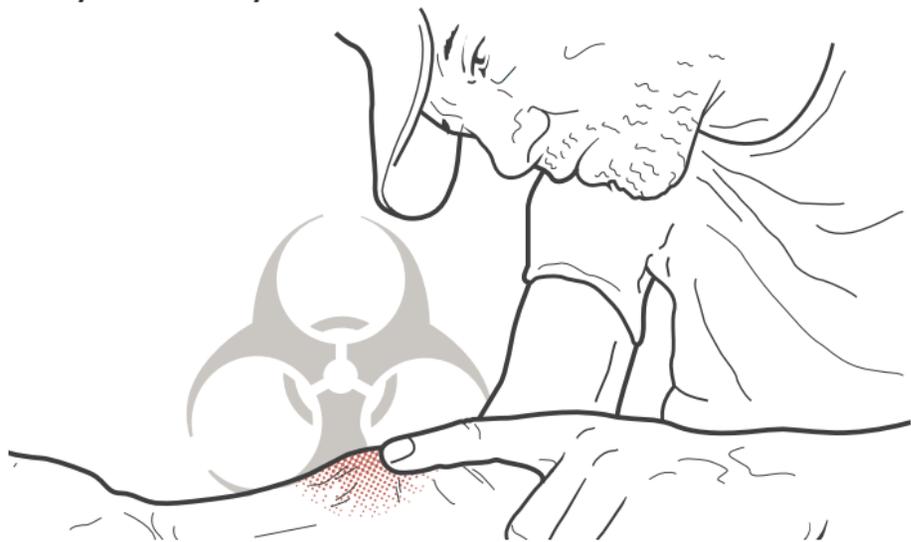
Many injectors get lumps and bumps. Most injuries go away if you stop injecting near them and keep them clean, but some can become infected.

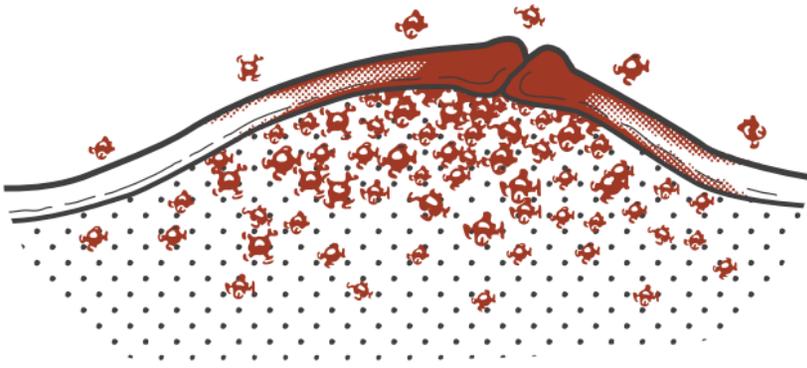
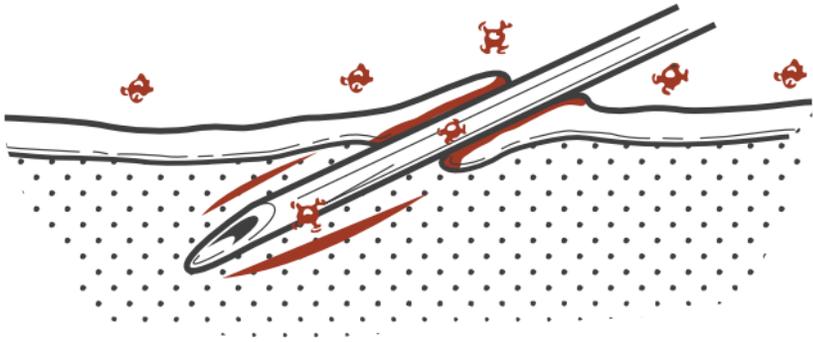




## What is an Infection?

An infection is when bacteria get underneath your skin and start to attack your body.

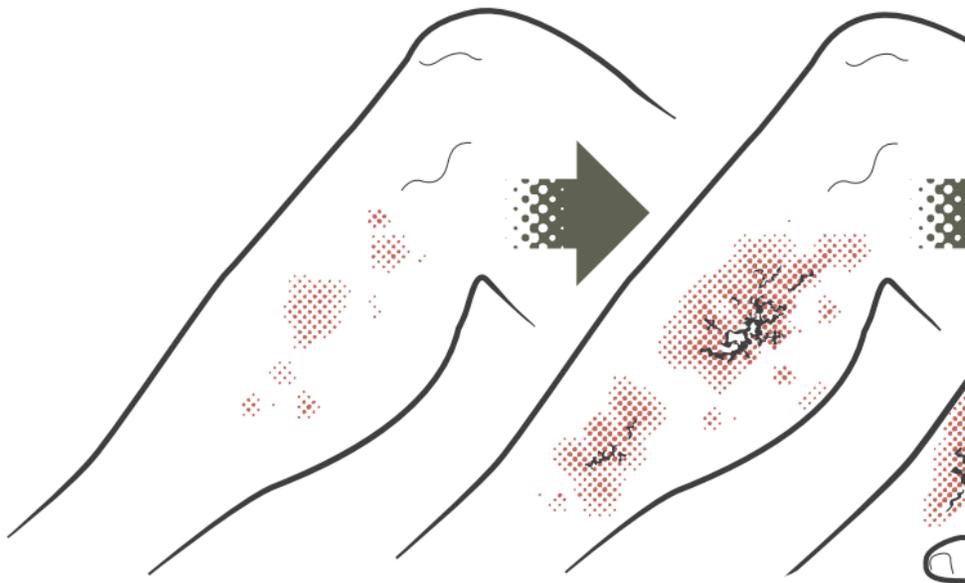


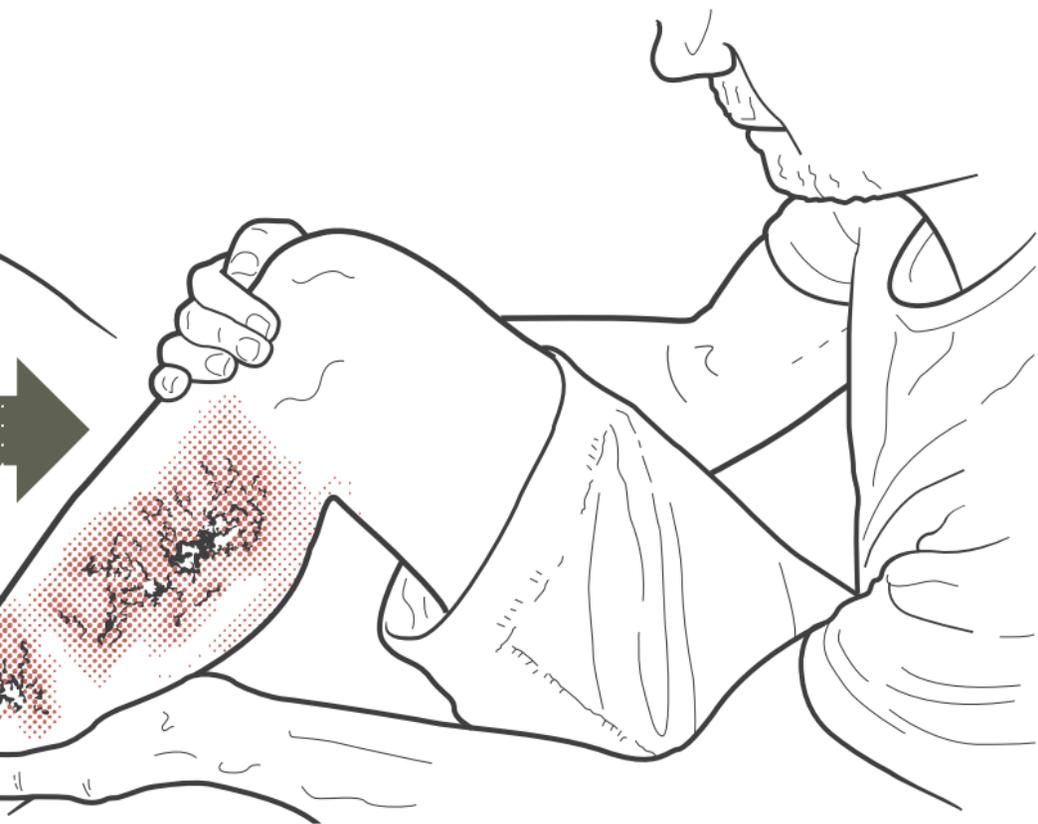




## **Infections are dangerous**

Without treatment, infections can get serious quickly. You could lose a limb or even die.

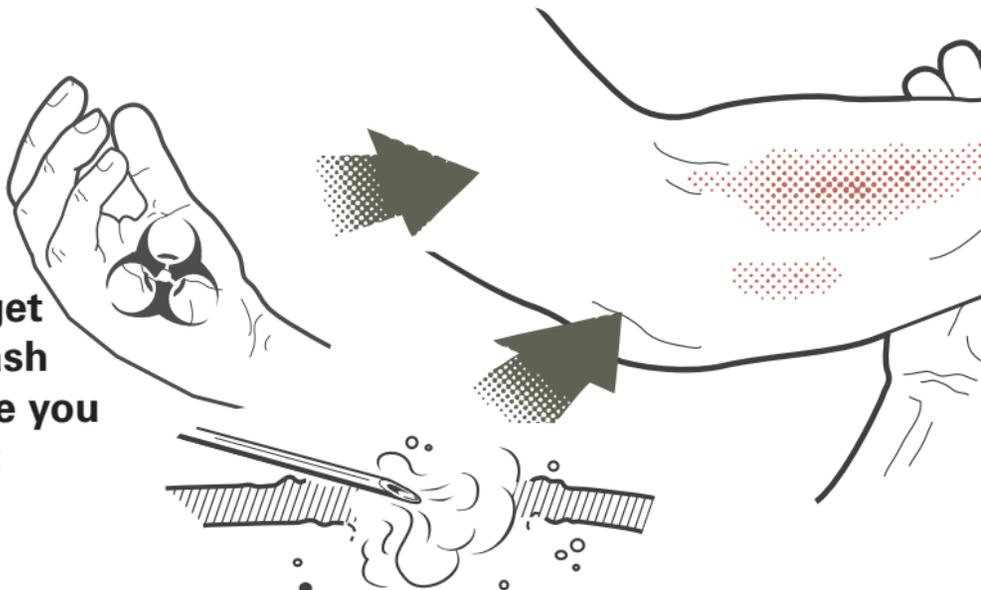




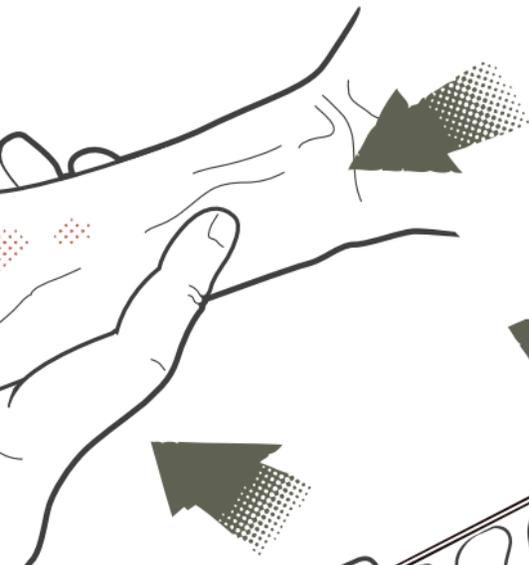


**You are more likely to get an infection if you...**

**...forget to wash before you inject**



**...miss the vein**



**...touch or lick  
the needle**



**...share kit**

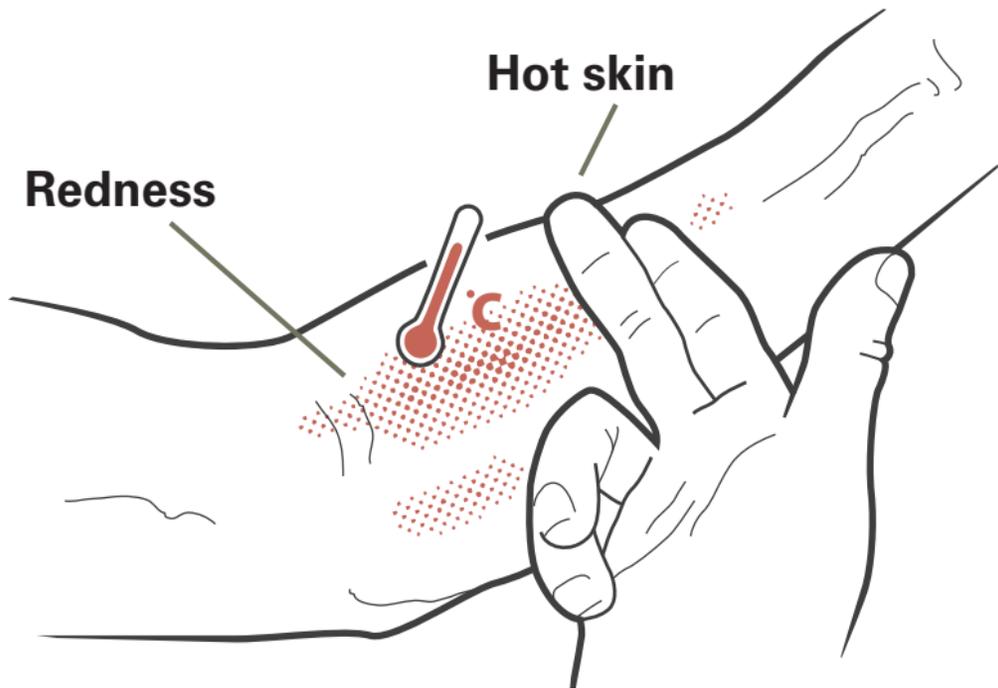


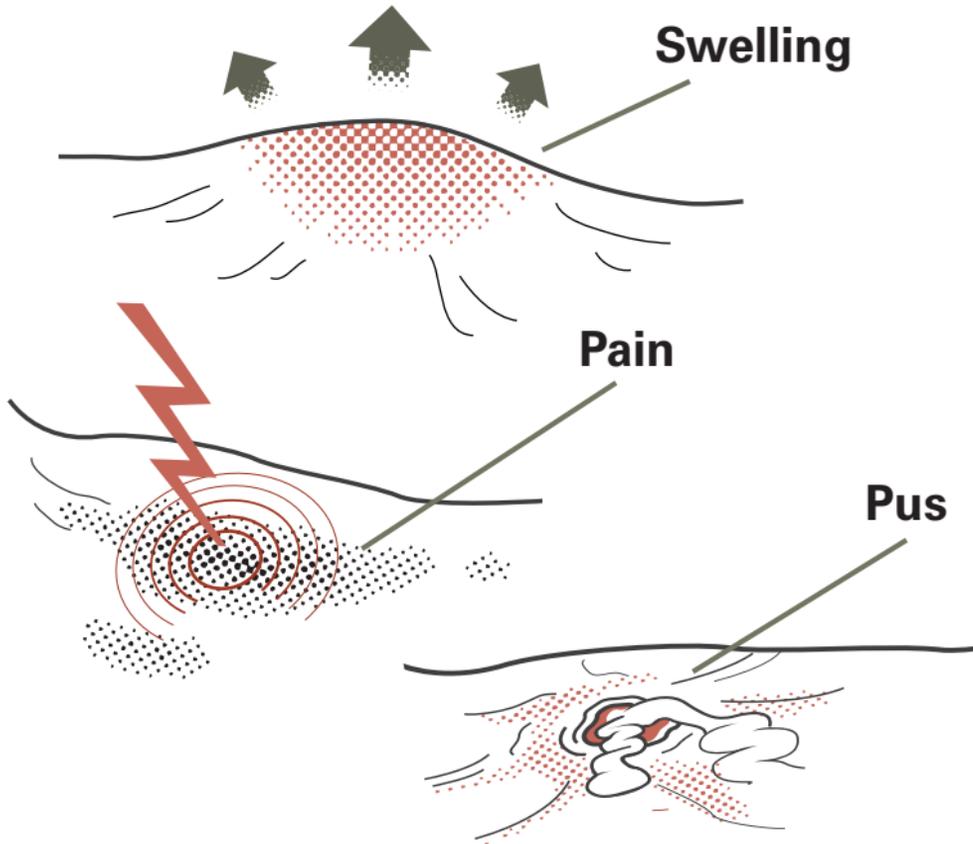
**...use kit more  
than once**





## Watch out for the signs of an infection







**Feeling feverish  
or unwell**

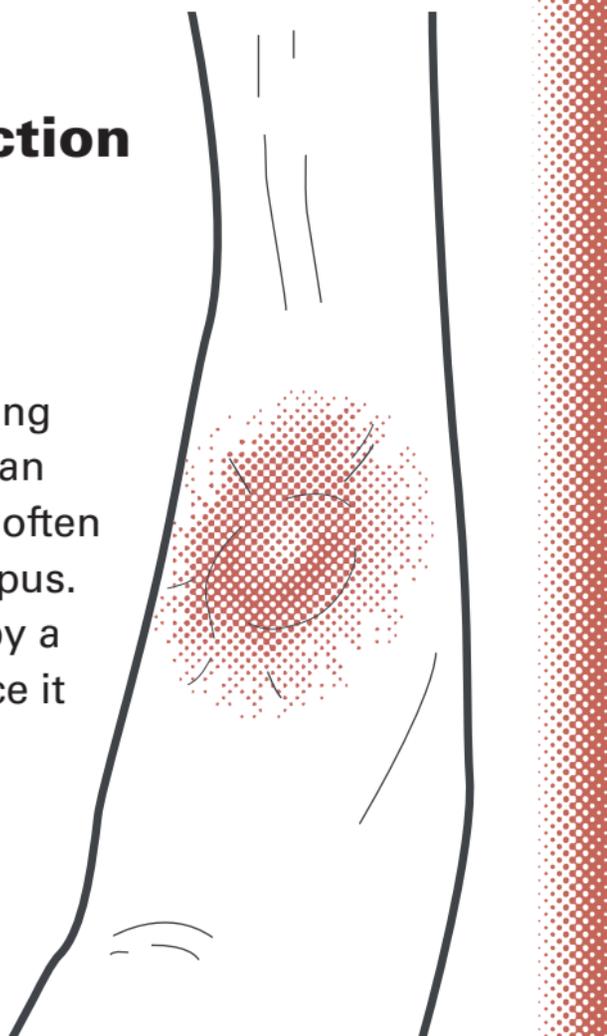


## Types of infection



### **Abscesses** (*ab-sess*)

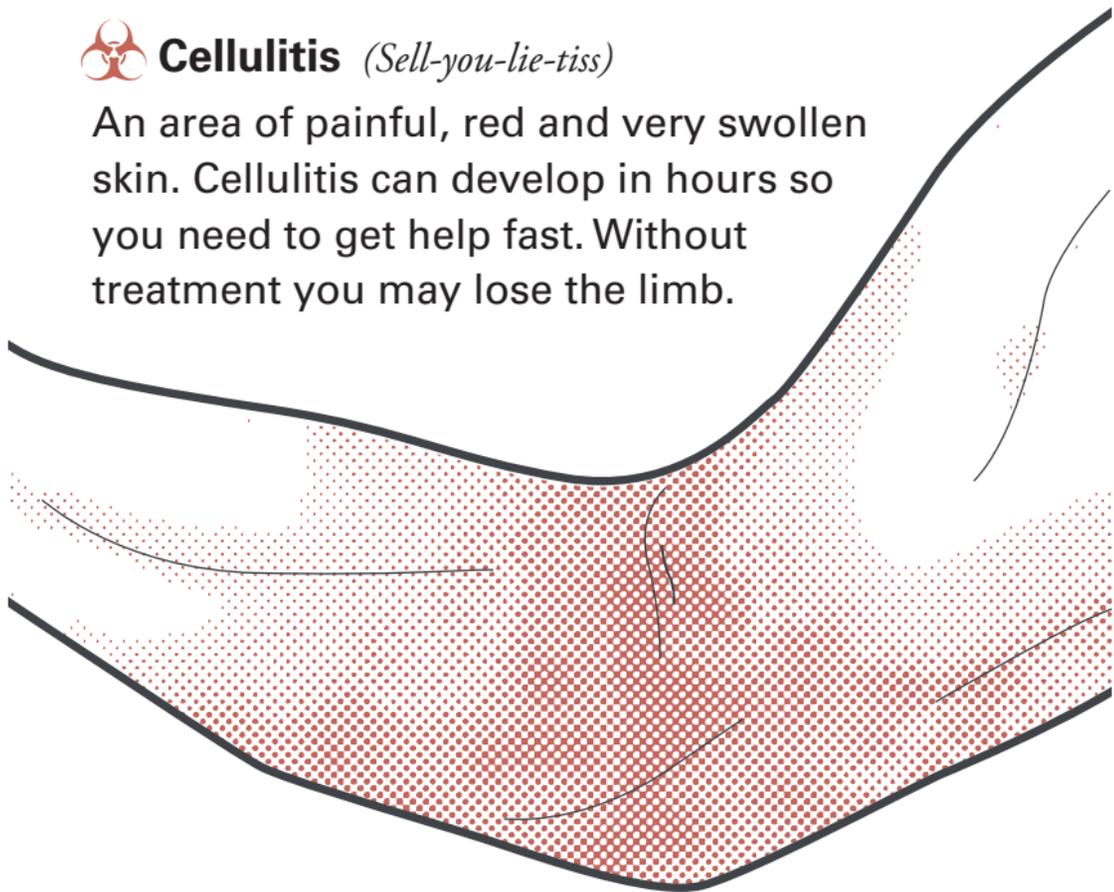
Abscesses are the most common type of injecting infection. An abscess is an infected lump which is often red, painful and full of pus. They must be treated by a doctor, don't try to lance it yourself.





## **Cellulitis** (*Sell-you-lie-tiss*)

An area of painful, red and very swollen skin. Cellulitis can develop in hours so you need to get help fast. Without treatment you may lose the limb.





## **Phlebitis** (*fleb-eye-tiss*)

Phlebitis is an infection of the vein. It can make the vein red and swollen. Phlebitis must be treated by a doctor.



***Injecting near an infection  
will always make it worse.***



## **Necrotising faciatis**

*(Necro-tie-sing fashy-eye-tiss)*

Necrotising faciatis is a very painful infection that can kill. It normally appears as dark or black areas on the skin. You must go to a hospital or see a doctor straight away.





## **Septacemia** (*Sep-ta-seemy-ah*)

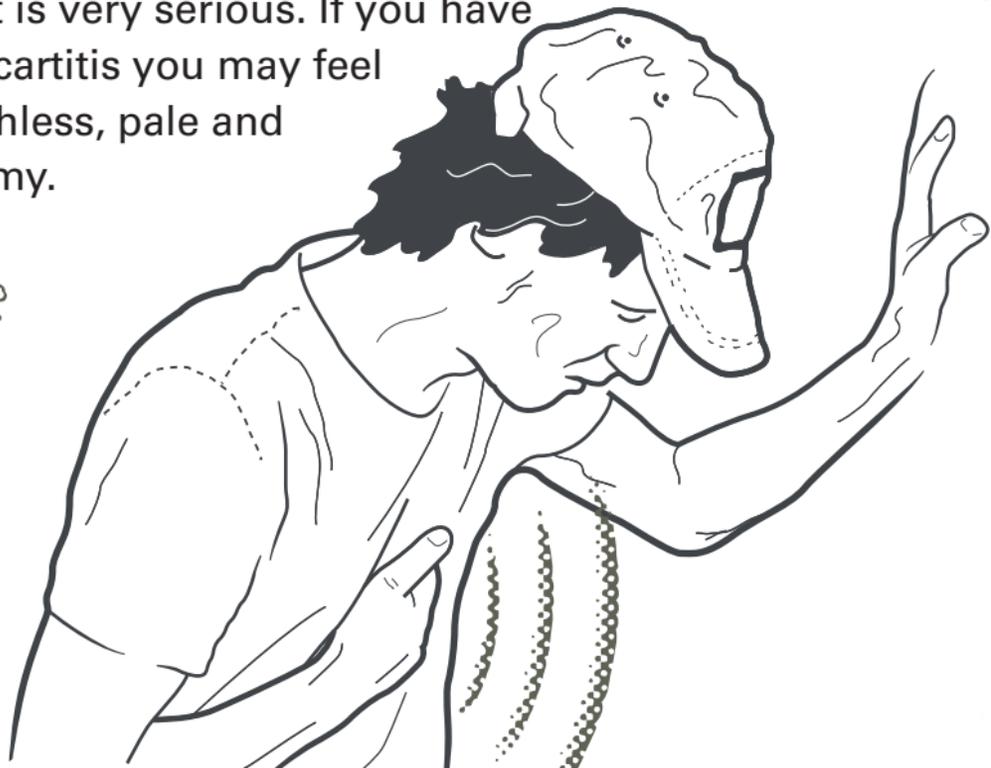
Septacemia is serious and can kill. It shows up as a rash that will not go away if you press a glass against it. People with septacemia may also feel feverish, tired and confused.





## **Endocarditis** (*End-oh-carty-eye-tis*)

Endocarditis is an infection of the heart and it is very serious. If you have endocarditis you may feel breathless, pale and clammy.



## Remember...



Injuries and lumps can become infected

✓ Watch out for signs of infection



Without treatment infections can become very dangerous





## If you have an infection or an injury



 **Stop injecting there and keep it clean**

Digging near an infection or injury will make it worse. Wash the area with soap and water.



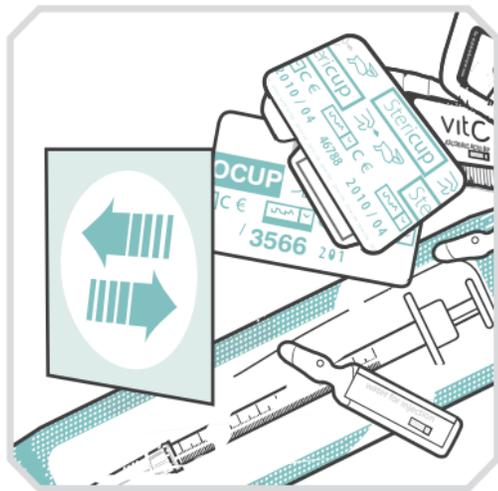
 **See a doctor**

Don't wait to see what happens. Most problems can be sorted out if you get help quickly.



## **Avoid infections and injuries**

**Most injuries and infections are caused by bad technique. Avoid problems by changing the way you inject.**



**✓ Use new kit for every hit**

Avoid infections and injuries by using sterile kit.



**✔ Wash with soap  
before you inject**

Wash away bacteria on your hands and the injection site. A swab is better than nothing.



**✔ Find a clean place  
just for you and no  
one else**



**⚠ Never share  
anything you use  
to inject**

Sharing spreads viruses  
like Hep C and HIV

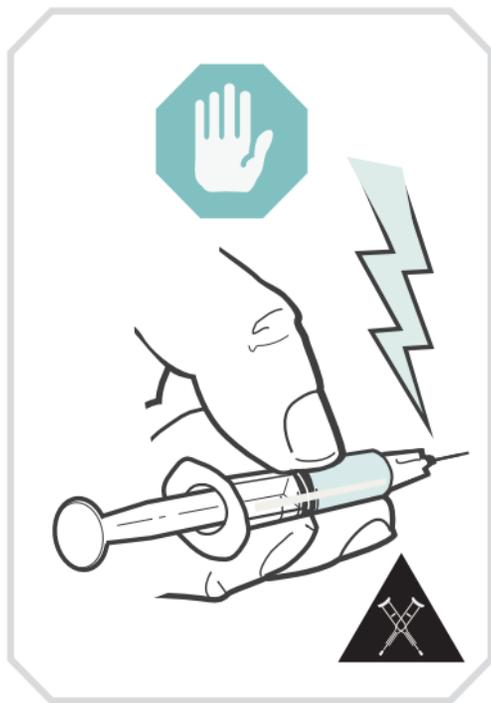


**⚠ Never touch or lick**  
Your skin and mouth are  
covered with bacteria.

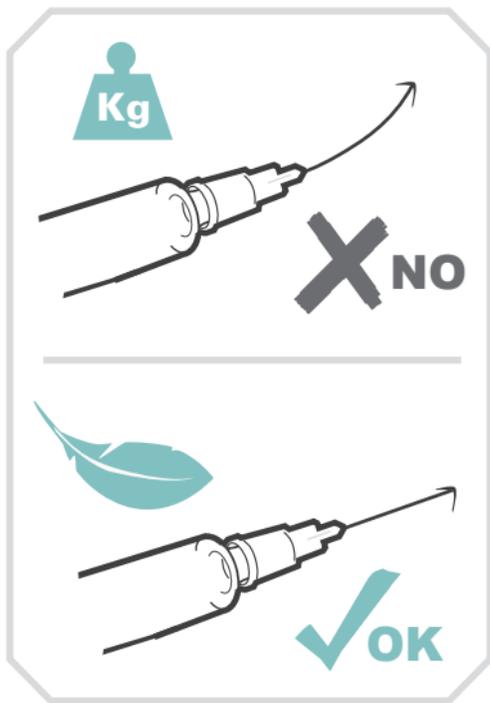
## Remember...

- ✓ Use sterile kit for every hit
- ✓ Wash with soap and water
- ✓ NEVER share
- ✓ NEVER touch or lick the pin

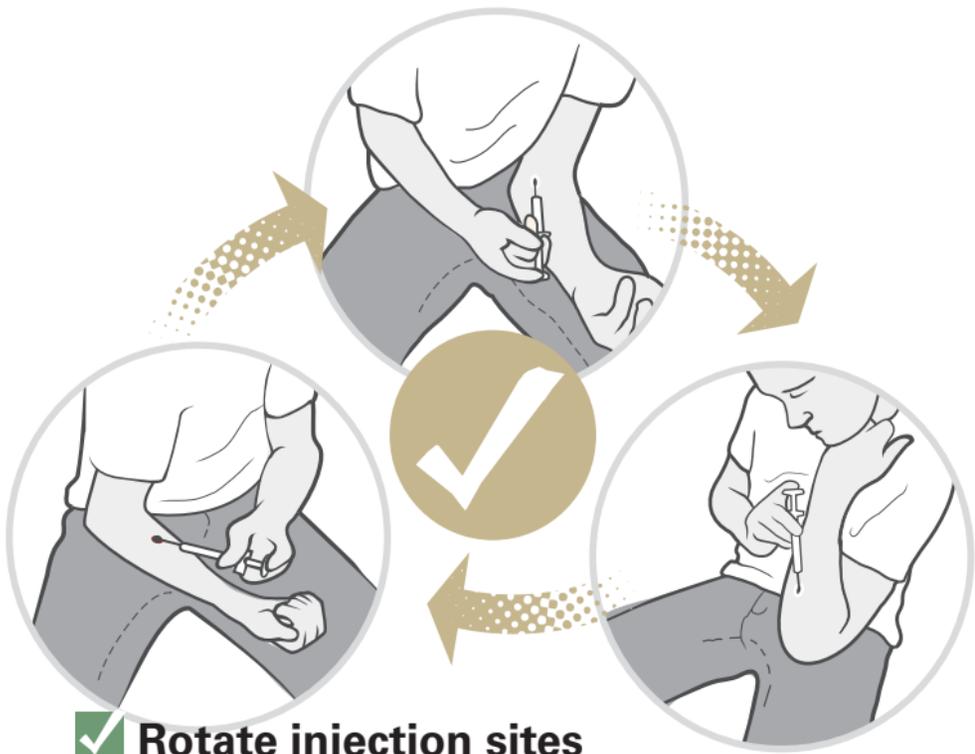




✔ **Go slowly**, and stop if you feel pain.



✔ **Be gentle**, take care not to bend the pin.



**✓ Rotate injection sites**

If you rotate your injection sites your veins will last longer. Try to pick three sites.



 **Know when to stop**

If you cannot find a vein in a safer place think about smoking instead or stopping altogether.

## Remember...

- ✓ Go slowly and be gentle
- ✓ Rotate injection sites
- ✓ Know when to stop



**[i]** code D5 | version 3.0  
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**[>]** aims  
To provide information that highlights specific risks associated with injecting drug use in a predominantly graphic format.

**[>]** audience  
Injecting drug users. Use with under 16s with support.

**[v]** content  
No swearing. Illustrations of drug use.

**[£]** funding  
Self-financed.



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**EXCHANGE  
SUPPLIES**