

# unisharp<sup>®</sup> FIXED

1 ml fixed needle syringe

Available with both **27G** and **29G** needles



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Exchange Supplies is a social enterprise established in 2002 to supply products, information, and services to improve and prolong the lives of people who inject drugs.

**Being a social enterprise means that we are principally driven by our health and social objectives which are:**

- reducing the health impacts of injecting drug use;
- developing injecting equipment that causes less harm;
- providing employment and training to people with a history of drug dependence; and
- improving the understanding of injecting drug use.

**In partnership with Terumo Australia we introduced syringes with coloured plungers to Queensland in November 2017, New South Wales, South Australia and Northern Territories in 2019, and are now very happy to be able to supply Western Australia in 2020!**

By choosing our products, you are providing high quality injecting equipment, with a proven track record of distribution to injecting drug users, designed to maximise the benefits of service provision, and contributing to the research and development of new products.

I am looking forward to working with harm reduction services in Australia to improve injecting equipment supply, and reduce accidental sharing of syringes.

**Andrew Preston**

Exchange Supplies

October 2020

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## Accidental sharing

In 2004 a video ethnography study of injecting drug use found that a significant cause of sharing was 'accidental sharing' of syringes, particularly where there was:

- shared storage of used injecting equipment;
- collective preparation of drugs for injection; and
- mix ups in injecting environments with multiple syringes/injectors.

This was not caused by lack of knowledge of BBV transmission, or decisions to take risks, but by the fact that all the syringes were identical. This was a risk inherent in the environment, that significantly increased the chances of BBV transmission regardless of the intentions of the injecting drug users. The study found high levels of awareness of the risk, and identified strategies implemented to reduce it but concluded that it would be most effectively reduced by the introduction of clearly visible difference to the syringes.

This problem wasn't confined to the study area (although it was particularly bad there with low coverage) and drug user groups in Australia and elsewhere have confirmed that this is an almost universal issue for injecting drug users who find themselves reusing injecting equipment, even if only occasionally.

Our 1ml Unisharp Fixed Needle Syringes have five different colour plungers to promote syringe recognition, and prevent accidental sharing. The range of colours allows couples to choose a colour that they stick to, and also allows people to collect equipment for use by others that is clearly differentiated.

When encouraged to do this by needle and syringe programme staff it provides a positive way for people to request more equipment for others which increases coverage, and reduces sharing.

Building change into the environment maximises the benefits, and is more likely to reduce sharing than relying on people to mark their injecting equipment to identify it. Having the difference built into the syringes, and not requiring any further action by the user of the syringe maximises the chances of the strategy working.



**Q. Are you encouraging syringe re-use?**

A. No. Single use is definitely the ideal, and all services should endeavour to issue more syringes than people need so that they never have to re-use.

However, syringe re-use is still a regular occurrence, and the coloured syringes endeavour to reduce the risks associated with syringe re-use.

**Q. Won't the colours be more attractive to children?**

A. They may be, but our experience in the UK has been that because of this parents report being extra careful about keeping syringes out of reach of children, and that if discarded in public places, they are more easy to see than 'standard' syringes and therefore get disposed of properly more quickly.

**Q. What do we do if one colour is more popular than another?**

A. In practice this really isn't a problem: workers in Queensland report that you can easily give the colours that you have more of to people as the extra syringes they take for their friends, or just say "oh, I haven't got any of them here, are you okay with these ones?", or pop them in packs that you're pre-making for people to grab and run.

**Q. Can one colour be better than another?**

A. No. they're all made on the same production line, and the plungers and caps are added at the end, so they are definitely all the same.

**Q. At primary NSEPs how many colours should we offer people?**

A. People should have more than enough syringes for their own needs, and usually these would be all one colour.

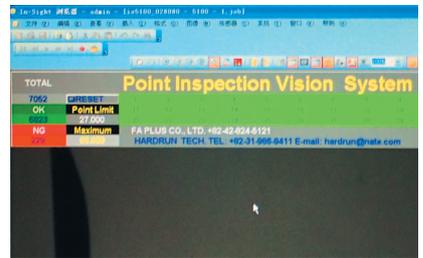
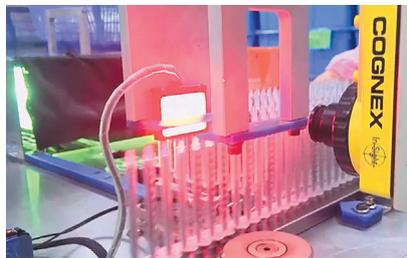
If there is any possibility that others might want to use their syringes, then they should take as many colours as they need - one other colour if there is just two of them, more if they regularly inject with others.

## Quality

We have over 10 years of experience supplying our own brand and proprietary needles and syringes to the harm reduction market. The launch of the 1ml Unisharp Fixed Needle Syringes exceeded our expectations.

Introductions of new syringe can always trigger client concerns and complaints but these have been few with the 1ml Unisharp Fixed Needle Syringe, and since the launch sales have grown organically, and steadily and are now at just under 1 million units per month, giving them an approximately 30% market share of the UK.

Every component of the syringe is inspected by eye before, during, and after assembly by trained personnel.



There are also cameras on the production line that take a digital photograph of every single needle, compare it on the fly with a master image of a perfect needle, checking that the needle is in at a perfect angle, and the point is sharp. If a needle doesn't pass this test, it is ejected from the production line and the materials are recycled.

We have sold over 20 million Unisharp syringes in the UK, and have been supplying the state of Queensland for three years, and NSW for one year.

	peer based	29G Unisharp Trial November 2018
	harm reduction wa	Survey Summary 178 Respondents

## 1. Did you try the syringes yourself?

Yes	No	Total
173	5	178
97.0%	3.0%	100%

## 2. Overall, how would you rate the Unisharp coloured Syringes?

1	2	3	4	5	Total
9	8	30	53	78	178
5%	4.5%	17.0%	29.5%	44.0%	100%

## 3. Would you like the coloured syringes to be available to you at your service?

Yes	No	Total
159	19	178
89.5%	10.5%	100%

## 4. Would you recommend the coloured syringes to a friend?

Yes	No	Total
159	19	178
89.5%	10.5%	100%

## 5. Do you think that the coloured syringes will help prevent accidentally sharing?

Yes	No	Total
156	22	178
87.5%	12.5%	100%

## 6. How did you dispose of the coloured syringes?

General waste	Public toilet	Returned it to the service	Sharps disposal unit	They got stolen	Used 1 and gave the rest away	Total
4	2	133	37	1	1	178
2.5%	1.0%	74.5%	21.0%	0.5%	0.5%	100%

## 7. Do you think we should make the white syringe another colour?

Yes	No	Did not answer	Purple	Green	Pink	Red	Glow in the dark/Fleoro
44	34	21	21	20	19	6	4

\*Most popular responses

Survey

8. Is there anything you would like to add?

No.	x 8
Love them.	x 4
Great.	x 2
<b>Plunger</b>	
The plunger was too tight.	The plunger is difficult to remove.
Difficult to pull back.	Have to use force to pull the plunger out
Liked that the plunger didn't fall out	
Once the plunger was pulled all the way out it sticks and gets stuck/blocked	
Make plunger so it can be removed. <b>Something about the design prevents bubbles from sitting in middle at tip end; hard to get rid of air bubble. Great tip! Lighter colours. Light blue please :)</b>	
<b>Manufacture of syringe isnt great,</b> one of the plungers fell out/was lose	
Yes. The only thing not suited with the colour syringes, is that, you can't pull out the plungers. Most people pull out the plungers to use it for mixing up in a spoon. It's clean & not infected with germ. This is why the use the plunger. People have talked to me about this, so I thought you should get this feedback too. Ty...	
<b>Air bubble</b>	
Problem with the air bubble removal	You can't get the air bubble from top of syringe.
Hard to remove remaining air.	Hard to get rid of the air bubble
Hard to clear air bubbles.	Couldn't get the bubble out.
The air bubbles dont come out. <b>The colours could be attractive to kids.</b>	
<b>Did not use due to dysfunctionality.</b> I like the coloured lid but they were very difficult to use. I couldn't get rid of air bubble.	
Air bubble hard to get rid of. <b>Need to pull plunger most of way down to get liquid down or you lose too much.</b>	
After drawing up it was difficult to remove all the air from the barrel	
<b>Syringes feel stiff,</b> upper cavity retains too much air, <b>sharp but not smooth.</b>	
I found it hard to get the last bit of air out of the syringe.	
Couldnt get rid of the air bubbles. I would not try again. Dont get them.	
<b>Usage</b>	
I found no real difference in usage.	Delicate but worked
Heaps better grip, recommend them highly.	Not so good for second use. But love them.
They were great. Easy to use. No problem.	They were noticeably better to use
Hard to use - not a fan. Might be due to the fact I don't like change.	
Not constant the first was easy too use but the rest were stiff	
Very smooth to operate; <b>plunger safety mechanism - great idea.</b>	
Tip is too big - lose most dope, needle part with whole doesn't suck thick blood well.	
I like them, easier to grip and the plunger a lot smoother to ues	
Good Idea with the finger grips. <b>Do away with the orange</b>	
Very fragile but good	
<b>Negative feedback</b>	
They are promoting using the same dirty needles, If people resude who puts water in.	
I like the collar on the old syringes for when halving shots	
Lids look like pen lids and were easy to lose	
Unsure if different gauge but more pain and leave larger entry mark.	
<b>Quality</b>	
Just not as good of quality.	Poor quality, needs improving

## Survey

Could be better	The quality is not up to the usual needles standard
Too fragile	They are sharper and better.
the quality isnt great. they felt weird and <b>plunger was looser than the normal fits</b>	
These feel less sharp than original. These hurt quite a lot	
<b>Colour</b>	
More colours the better!	Is there green
I think the boxes should have mixed colours	Because people relate orange to drug users.
Boxes should have mixed colours	Would replace white with green.
Fluoro green	You should bring out festival seasons.
Mixed colours for different times of the year :)	Better than the old.
They should be black.	Appeal to kids coloured, eg. lollies, textas, lego.
White and grey should be different colours.	
Needle part is easy to bed when you push through scar tissue. Slightly stronger needle would be the only improvement that i can see	
Possibly mix the colours in the boxes so can def know whose is whose.	
Be better not to have white or silver at all. Have blue, orange, yellow, red, purple.	
It doesn't matter about the colour as I have seen 2 people with same colours	
Better to have all bright colours. Need to test for a few months.	
I think a 27g and 29g should be available. <b>27g push through thicker skin a bit better.</b>	
Fit lids need to stay a bright (danger) colour, red or bright orange.	
White looks too much like a regular BD so it'd get shared. <b>Blunt tip.</b>	
Get rid of the blue and <b>you can't pull the plunger out</b>	
<b>Reduces sharing</b>	
I have HIV. It stops people using mine in our house where 7 other users live.	
This works when you're with a partner so you don't get them mixed up	
These are great when using in a group situation. Every fitpack should have 5 different coloured fits. <b>Only negative is that if found in public spaces people dont recognise these and more likely for needle stick injuries.</b>	
I loved them, I knew which was mine.	
<b>General positive feedback</b>	
Heaps better.	Better than the ultrafine.
Awesome.	Good idea. Should be rolled out.
Much better, safer option.	No, they are great 10/10
Its a great fun idea	Excellent
They're amazing, I love them.	Excellent. <b>Blue easy to disguise.</b>
Good idea	All good.
Awesome work, they are great.	Be good to have all the time.
Good idea	Stock them here soon
Please make them and soon as possible. Thanks.	
No, it would be negative comments and as you know all the positive advise and help etc and the ladies and a fun fits	
Good job, keeps it interesting and good way to discuss other issues.	
<b>PBHRWA</b>	
You do a lovely job.	This service is great.
Love PBHRWA!	Thanks
Great work.	Great service!! Thanks :)

Survey

Fit exchange is a great service.	Great place
Love your work, keep it up guys.	Girls are great on the desk.
Thanks for the free fits you guys are awesome	Merry Christmas.
Yes I would like more outlets and more opening times.	
I think this is a great program, thank you for continuing to minimise harm for those of us struggling with substance abuse.	
<b>Miscellaneous comments/suggestions</b>	
No brainer	Free drugs to put in them
A syringe with a longer needles is useful.	Mixing cup, scale, water.
Little mixing cup.	Drugs
Drugs	Black syringe/steroid needles complimentary 05 scrip
Filters should be supplied with every fit to stop dirties and the disease transmitted by blood.	
I'm in California, when & where can I find these and how much do they cost?	
I would like to be given a selection/option as to what syringes i may require.	
Narcan! Didn't like it as much as the BDs but happy to support for others to use	
Tips that once used retract like epipens to save sticks for kids, non-users, non hep c.	
Pressure government to allow the sale of single use syringes.	
<b>No comment</b>	
Nothing to add.	Nothing
No thank you	N/A





**EXCHANGE**  
SUPPLIES

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