



ONE KIT ONE HIT

Reducing
injection
risks

Produced by

La Direction des communications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

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REDUCING INJECTION RISKS

When you use safer injection equipment, you reduce the risks of developing complications like infections and abscesses.

You also reduce the risks of getting infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) when you use new equipment each time you inject.

If you already have HIV or HCV infection, you should still use new injection equipment each time you inject, because you can catch these infections more than once. Each new infection can make you sicker than the previous one.

Opioids (*hydromorphone, morphine or oxycodone*) are usually in capsule or pill form and taken orally. These medications contain wax, cellulose or talc; if they are injected, the following complications can occur:

- **Blood clots**
- **Lung problems**
- **Skin lesions that can lead to amputation**



EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Alcohol swab



Sterile water



Syringe, 1 cc



Maxicup™



Maxicup™: 5 cc sterile cooker, handle, cotton filter, dry swab



Sterifilt™



Tourniquet



Use a 1 cc syringe if it can contain the dose you want to inject.

If the drug is in capsule or pill form, make sure to add enough water to dissolve it completely. Adding water doesn't lessen the effects of the active substance.

If there is too much solution to fit into a 1 cc syringe, use a 3 cc syringe.

- **Syringe, 3 cc**
- **Needle**



The risk of HIV and HCV transmission is higher with a used 3 cc syringe. Because the syringe and needle are not attached, there is more dead space in a 3 cc than in a 1 cc syringe, and therefore it could retain more blood.

BEFORE INJECTING

Clean hands and a clean surface on which to put the injection equipment

1

Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an antiseptic gel or alcohol swabs.



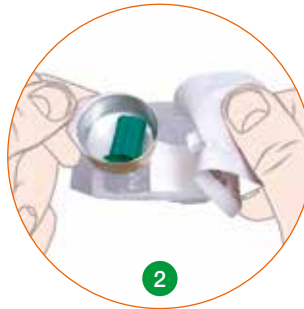
2

Clean the preparation surface with a clean cloth or alcohol swabs before putting your injection equipment on it. If possible put a clean mat on the preparation surface.



PREPARE THE STERILE COOKER (MAXICUP™)

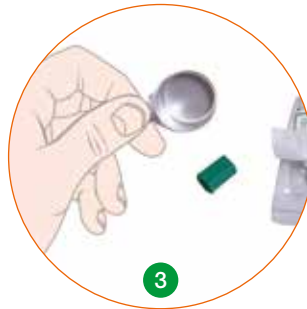
Unwrap the Maxicup™ carefully so the contents don't fall out of the package.



Take the cup out: make sure you don't touch the inside of the cup to keep it sterile. Don't touch the filter or the dry swab and leave them in the package.

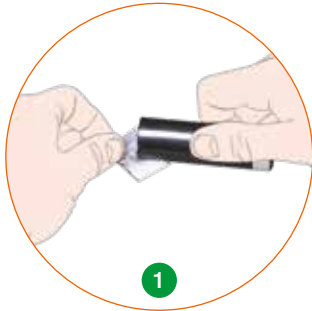
It's important to insert the handle before using the Maxicup™. This will

- avoid burns;
- make it easier to hold;
- make it more stable.



PREPARE THE POWDER

Leave the drug in the bag in which it came or put it in a clean envelope.



Crush the drug with a spoon or lighter.



When the drug has been ground down into a fine powder, roll the bag or envelope between your fingers to mix the powder well.



Pour the powder into the sterile cup (Maxicup™).

Adding vitamin C or vinegar does not help dissolve opioids or make the active substance more potent. However, it can damage veins or skin at the point of injection. Never add lemon juice to the powder.

Drugs that are finely ground dissolve more easily.

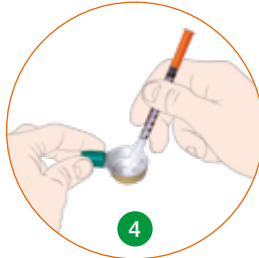
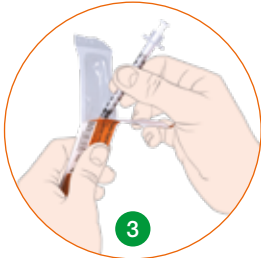
PREPARE THE SOLUTION

Add enough water to dilute the powder. Adding water doesn't lessen the effects of the active substance.



Heat the solution until small bubbles appear; this will dissolve the solution better.

Open the syringe package. Don't touch the plunger.

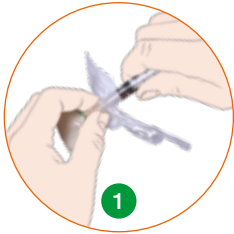


Mix the solution with the syringe plunger. Let the solution cool.

The powder has to be dissolved well in water.

For capsules and pills, let the solution cool after cooking so the wax can solidify. This way, you won't inject it. If you don't let the solution cool, draw the drug from the bottom of the Maxicap™ to avoid the wax.

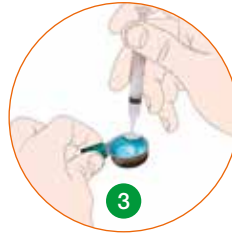
FILTER THE SOLUTION WITH THE STERIFILT™ AND THE COTTON FILTER



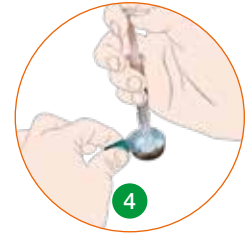
Open the Sterifilt™ package. Don't take the filter out of the package to avoid touching it with your fingers. Push the Sterifilt™ firmly onto the syringe.



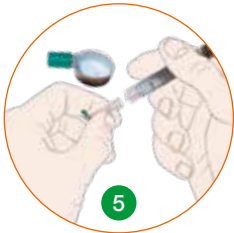
Let the cotton filter fall into the cooker, without touching it with your fingers.



Rest the membrane of the Sterifilt™ on the cotton filter that is already in the solution.



Slowly draw the solution up into the barrel of the syringe.



Remove the Sterifilt™ from the syringe. Remove air bubbles.



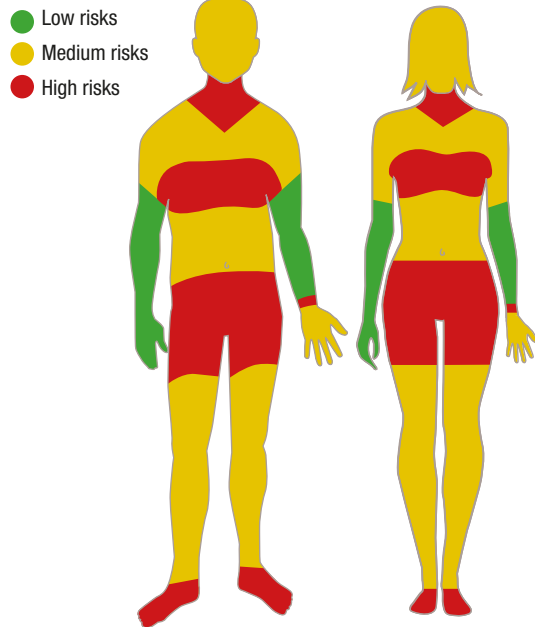
If you use a 3 cc syringe, filter the solution with a Sterifilt™ and a cotton filter **before** attaching the needle.

To attach the needle onto the 3 cc syringe, keep the cap on the needle, then push and twist it to fix it on tightly.

TIPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE FILTERING

- **Using two filters (Sterifilt™ and cotton filter) is essential when injecting opioid medications, and can also be useful with other substances.**
- Filtering the solution with the Sterifilt™ and the cotton filter preserves the needle and your veins. Using two filters results in a clearer liquid without lessening the effects of the substance.
- If using only one filter, the Sterifilt™ is safer than a cotton filter.
- Don't reuse filters because they're already full of residue after the first use.

LEVEL OF RISKS DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU INJECT



USE A TOURNIQUET BEFORE INJECTING

Don't share
your tourniquet.
Replace it
regularly.

Loop the tourniquet around your arm, 5 cm above the injection site. Hold the end on the inside of your arm with your thumb and let the other end hang on the outside of your arm.

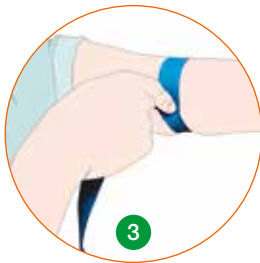
Holding the tourniquet in place with your thumb, pick up the loose end with your free fingers and stretch it out lightly.



Keep it extended and place the loose end of the tourniquet over the other end. Make sure to keep it stretched so it stays in place.

Make a small loop to slide the free end between the tie and the arm.

Grab the loose end in your mouth and pull.

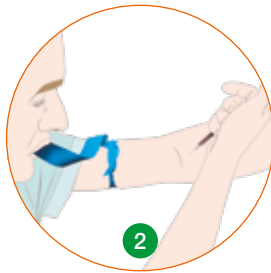


PROCEED WITH THE INJECTION

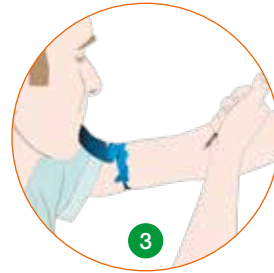
Clean the skin at and around the point of injection using an alcohol swab.



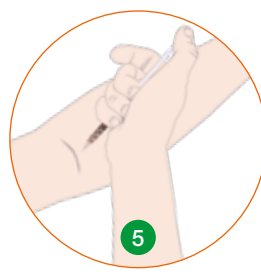
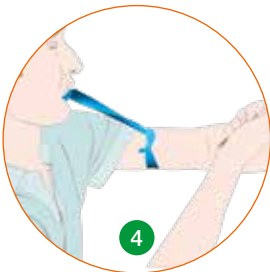
Place the needle at a 35 degree angle, with the bevel pointing up. Insert the needle into the vein.



Draw back on the plunger a bit to make sure it's in the vein. The blood that flows into the syringe should be dark red.



Before injecting, release the tourniquet, using your mouth to pull on the loose end.



Inject the solution **slowly**.

Clean your tourniquet with an alcohol swab after every use.

AFTER INJECTING

Apply pressure to the injection site with the **dry swab** from the Maxicup™ for several minutes.



Put the needle and syringe into a used-needle container.



Protect other people and the environment!

Throw out the rest of the equipment in a garbage can.



CONCLUSION

To reduce the risks linked to injection, the following is recommended:

Always use new injection equipment.



Use more water to dissolve pills and capsules.



Choose the right syringe for the amount of solution you'll inject.



Cook the solution to make sure it contains less residue and fewer bacteria.



Use two filters (Sterifilt™ and cotton filter). It is essential when injecting opioid medications, and can also be useful with other substances.



HELP AND RESOURCES



Here is the logo that identifies places (community groups, pharmacies, CLSCs and hospitals) where you can get **free** new injection equipment and a used-needle container, and return the container.

Call Info-Santé 811 toll-free or go to the *Finding a Resource* section at sante.gouv.qc.ca to find out where you can

- get new equipment
- get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B; and
- get tested for sexually transmitted infections, HIV and hepatitis.

If you want to find out more about drug addiction resources, contact the following (toll-free):



1-800-265-2626



HELP AND
REFERRAL

Montréal area: 514 527-2626
drogue-aidereference.qc.ca

To prevent the risks linked to overdose,

- avoid using drugs when you're alone,
- when you're in a group, don't all use drugs at the same time,
- use supervised injection services, when available,
- have naloxone on hand.

Naloxone is a medication used as an antidote for opioid overdoses. In Québec, naloxone is available free of charge and without a prescription at any pharmacy. To find a pharmacy near you that has naloxone anytime, call Info-Santé toll free at 811 or go to sante.gouv.qc.ca/en, *Finding a Resource*.

Recognizing a possible overdose

The person might have used medications or illicit drugs and shows the following signs:

- No response to sound or pain.
- Laboured or snore-like breathing, or absence of breathing.

If the person seems to be unconscious:

1. Try making them respond to sound (yell their name) or pain (rub the centre of their chest hard).

If they are unresponsive:

2. Call or have someone call 9-1-1.
3. Administer a dose of naloxone.

If they are unresponsive:

4. Perform chest compressions immediately (give 2 compressions of 5 cm deep per second) or start giving CPR if you have been trained, using the barrier mask.

If they are unresponsive 3 minutes after administration:

5. Administer another dose of naloxone.