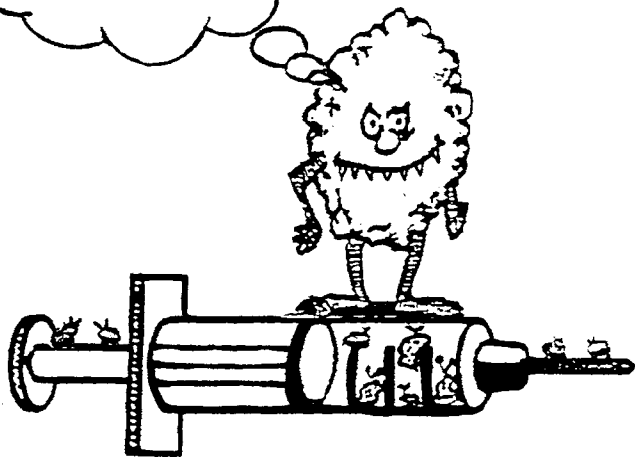


# ABSCESS

A quick and easy  
guide on how to  
PREVENT  
ABSCESSSES



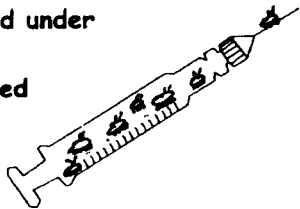
## What is an ABSCESS?

- ⇒ it is also called a BOIL
- ⇒ it is a pocket of pus under your skin
- ⇒ ABSCESSSES can lead to more serious infections, like blood or heart infections, and may cause you a lot of PAIN.



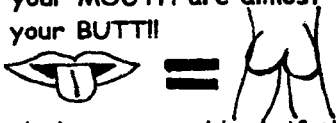
## What causes an INJECTION ABSCESS?

- ⇒ Tiny GERMS getting pushed under the skin by the rig.
- ⇒ Injecting a hit that is mixed with something dirty (like spit or toilet water).



## Where do the GERMS come from?

- ⇒ GERMS are EVERYWHERE! They live on everybody's SKIN!
- ⇒ The GERMS in your MOUTH are almost the SAME as the GERMS in your BUTT!!



- ⇒ GERMS usually don't cause problems if they stay where they belong! BUT if SPIT GERMS, SHIT GERMS, or SKIN GERMS get in the wrong places, like UNDER your SKIN or in your BLOOD, you can get VERY SICK!

## How do I get an ABSCESS?

- MISSES- not HITTING the vein



- LICKING the BUBBLE off the top of the point (these are spit germs)
- LICKING the SITE before or after fixing (these are spit germs)

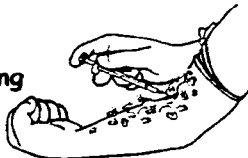


- Using a DIRTY MIX, like toilet water, spit, etc.

- TOUCHING the FILTERS too much (these are skin germs)



- SHARING spoons, water, filters and rigs with other people (these are other people's germs)
- NOT cleaning the site with an ALCOHOL SWAB BEFORE fixing (these are skin germs)



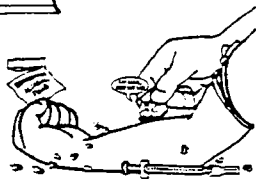
**INFECTIONS CAN BE HARD TO HEAL, IT IS BETTER TO PREVENT INFECTIONS**

## How do I PREVENT getting ABSCESSSES?

- 1) Make sure you have YOUR OWN clean RIG.
- 2) Have YOUR OWN SPOON & WATER for cooking your drugs.
- 3) Use a CLEAN NEW FILTER-try not to touch it too much.
- 4) Put your rig in a safe spot where the point will not touch anything!
- 5) Take the time to find a VEIN.



- 6) Wipe the site with a new swab-let it dry (if used right, the swab can kill 90% of the GERMS).
- 7) Inject SLOWLY and CAREFULLY.
- 8) Take the rig out and apply PRESSURE using a kleenex, toilet paper, etc.



## What should I do if I have a MISS?

To PREVENT your MISS from turning into an ABSCESS or an INFECTION, put a WARM TOWEL or WARM CLOTH around the miss.

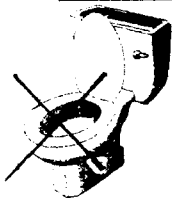
*WHY?? The warmth helps your body ABSORB the DRUG FASTER.*

## What are some things that I SHOULD NOT DO when FIXING?

- ☒ DON'T BORROW or LEND your rigs, filters, spoons or water to other people!

*WHY?? You don't want to inject other people's GERMS into your body. HIV and HEP C are GERMS too, and may also be passed on by sharing supplies.*

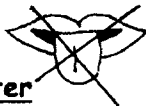
- ☒ DON'T MIX your drugs with SPIT, TOILET WATER, or any other unclean mix!



*WHY?? There are MILLIONS of GERMS in these things and you don't want to put them into your body. You could get very SICK! BOILED WATER is the BEST to use. If you don't have that, then use TAP WATER. If you have to use toilet water, take it from the TANK instead of the bowl.*

- ☒ DON'T LICK the BUBBLE off the POINT!

*WHY?? You don't want the GERMS from your MOUTH to be injected under your skin. You could get VERY SICK!*



- ☒ DON'T LICK the SITE before or after fixing!

*WHY?? You can get a BAD INFECTION if you get the GERMS from your mouth under your skin.*

- ☒ DON'T use the SWAB after fixing!

*WHY?? The SWAB is to CLEAN the site BEFORE fixing. The alcohol in the swab may toughen the skin and the vein if used after.*

## What should I do if I have an ABSCESS?

- Try to keep the area **CLEAN, DRY** and **OPEN TO** the **AIR**.

*WHY?? GERMS MULTIPLY like crazy in DARK, WARM, MOIST places.*

- Keep an eye on the area to see if it is getting **BIGGER, SMALLER** or starting to get a head of **PUS** on it.

*WHY?? If the area is getting smaller, it is probably getting better.*

*If the area is getting BIGGER and there is PUS, it is probably getting WORSE and you should go to the DOCTOR.*

## When should I go to a DOCTOR?

If you have a **FEVER** for more than **1 or 2 DAYS**, **PAIN, REDNESS** or **SWELLING** at the **SITE**, you **NEED** to go to the **DOCTOR**.

- \* Especially if the pain and redness is spreading.

*WHY?? Many infections need special TREATMENT or ANTIBIOTICS.*



**IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO SEE A DOCTOR OR NURSE. MANY INFECTIONS NEED SPECIAL TREATMENT OR ANTIBIOTICS**

## What should I do if I DON'T want to go to the DOCTOR?

If you choose to DRAIN the ABSCESS yourself, there are a few things to remember:

- ☞ Apply something WARM to the area 4-5 times a day until the pus comes to a head.

*WHY?? The warmth should help bring the pus to a head.*

- ☞ Use a CLEAN NEEDLE if you choose to poke the sore. NEVER squeeze very hard.

*WHY?? The pus should come out easily. Squeezing can spread the infection even more.*

- ☞ Always keep the ABSCESS as clean as possible. Keep a DRY clean bandage over the site.

*WHY?? Now that the sore is open, you don't want to get anymore GERMS in it. You can get SUPPLIES at STREETWORKS.*

- ☞ Holes in the skin must HEAL from the BOTTOM UP. Don't try to squeeze the top edges together with tape to heal it.

*WHY?? You could end up with a hole under the skin that will never heal right.*

You can exchange  
your RIGS & get  
swabs, bleach, clean  
water & ties at  
STREETWORKS  
or your nearest  
NEEDLE  
EXCHANGE!



This booklet has been produced by Michelle Pall of Streetworks. Some of the pictures and information in this booklet are provided by THE VEIN CARE HANDBOOK published by Streetworks(Edmonton) and the GETTING OFF RIGHT HANDBOOK produced by the Harm Reduction Coalition (New York). Reproduction of any part of this booklet for educational purposes and free distribution is encouraged. Please credit the original document as well as the Vein Care Handbook and the Getting Off Right Handbook when reproducing it.

An extra special thanks goes out all the people that were so open and willing to share their life experiences with me. You know who you are, and I am so grateful to all of you for allowing me to connect with you!