



# What Patients Need to Know About Safe Medical Injections

## Did you know...



...in the last 10 years, more than 125,000 patients in the United States were told to get tested for hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and HIV due to syringes being used on more than one patient and medicine vials being used incorrectly.

## What is **Injection Safety**?

An injection is a way of putting medicine into the body using a needle and syringe, and includes “shots” and IVs. Injection safety includes the ways to give injections in the safest way possible for patients, health care workers and others. For example, needles and syringes only should be used one time. Safe injection practices are meant to prevent the spread of diseases between patients, between a patient and his or her doctor or nurse, and also to prevent accidental needle sticks.

## Why is **Injection Safety** important?

Diseases can spread between many people from health care workers not following safe injection practices. Safe injection practices are important because they prevent the spread of diseases like hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

## Who should know about safe injection practices?

Anyone who receives an injection or IV should know about safe injections. Anyone who gives an injection or IV (such as a doctor or nurse) should understand and follow safe injection practices.

## Where can unsafe injection practices occur?

- Hospitals
- Outpatient clinics
- Doctor’s offices
- Dialysis centers
- Nursing homes
- Day-surgery centers
- Anywhere an injection is given!



## What are some examples of **unsafe** injection practices?

- If the same syringe is used to give medicine to more than one patient, even if the needle is changed.
- If the same medicine vial is used for more than one patient, and if the vial is entered with a syringe that already has been used to give medicine to another patient.
- If a bag of saline or other IV fluid is used for more than one patient, and if a syringe enters a bag that already has been used for another patient.

Only **One** Needle, Only **One** Syringe, and **Only** for **You!**



# Injection Safety for Patients

Most health care workers (such as doctors, nurses and others) do follow safe injection practices, but sometimes unsafe practices occur. Diseases like hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV can be spread if injection tools like needles or syringes are used on more than one patient, or if vials are shared when giving medicine to more than one patient.

## What can I do to protect myself against unsafe injection practices?

- ✓ Ask your health care worker whether they use **only one needle, only one syringe and only for you!**
- ✓ Talk with your doctor or nurse about safe injection practices and find out what they do to make sure every injection they give is safe.
- ✓ Find out more information about injection safety from:
  - CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/>
  - The One and Only Campaign: <http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/>

## Helpful terms:

**Health care workers** – doctors, nurses and other trained health care workers

**Hepatitis B** – a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus

**Hepatitis C** – a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus

**HIV** – the virus that can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS

**Injection** – forcing a fluid into the body by using a syringe, or a “shot”

**IV** – intravenous, or ‘within a vein’

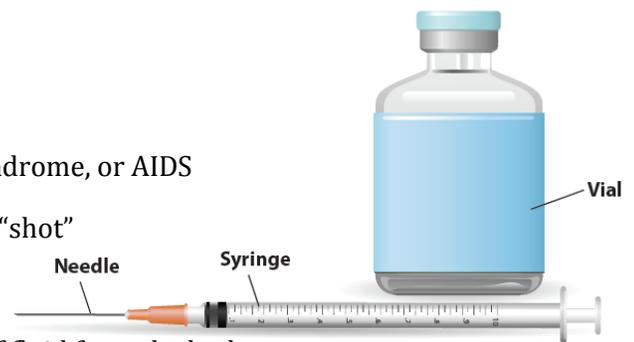
**Needle** – a sharp pointed object used for injection or removal of fluid from the body

**Syringe** – a device used to inject fluids into the body or draw fluids from the body

**Transmission** – spread, as would an infection from one patient to another

**Vial** – a small container or bottle that holds medicine

**Entering/accessing a vial** - the process of inserting a needle into the vial to draw up medicine



Adapted from: The One & Only Campaign.  
<http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org>



**Colorado’s Medical Injection Safety Campaign** is a public health project to raise awareness among patients and health care workers about safe injection practices. Protect your health by learning about injection safety!

**Only One Needle, Only One Syringe, and *Only* for You!**



Colorado Department  
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and Environment

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