What to expect

Heroin

The high
- A high that lasts 20 minutes – 2 hours
- Feeling intense pleasure and reduced pain
- Warm skin, dry mouth, heavy feeling arms and legs
- Nausea, vomiting and severe itching
- Slow, shallow breathing

Coming down
- Feeling restless, sweaty, stomach cramps and diarrhea
- Muscle spasms and bone pain
- High blood pressure
- Strong cravings for more heroin

Note: combining substances can be dangerous. Proceed with caution.

Crack/COKE

The high
- A high that lasts 15–45 minutes
- Feeling an intense, euphoric rush
- Warm skin, dry mouth
- Feeling thirsty, not hungry
- Rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Auditory hallucinations, delusions

Coming down
- Feeling restless, sweaty and twitchy
- Sensitivity to noise and light
- Feelings of paranoia
- Strong cravings for more crack

Signs of overdose

Heroin overdose

Feels like:
- You can’t stay awake
- You don’t have any energy or strength
- You can’t walk, can’t talk

Looks like:
- Slow pulse or no pulse
- Slow breathing or no breathing
- Skin looks pale and blue, feels cold
- Can’t wake up or talk
- Pupils are pinned or eyes are rolled back
- Vomiting
- Body is limp

Crack/COKE overdose

Feels like:
- Your heart is pumping fast
- You’re short of breath
- Your body is hot, sweaty and shaky
- You have chest pain
- You can’t talk, can’t walk

Looks like:
- Fast pulse or no pulse
- Fast or no breathing
- Hot and sweaty skin
- Confusion, hallucinations, unconscious
- Can’t talk, can’t walk
- Vomiting
- Seizures

What to do if someone ODs

1. Call out for help – do not leave the victim
2. If they’ve OD’d on heroin, try to get them awake and moving
   - If they’ve OD’d on crack/coke, try to get them to slow down and relax
3. Call 9-1-1 for an ambulance, send someone to seek help and report back
4. Tell paramedics as much as you can about what happened

Ready to detox?
Help is just a phone call away.

Call Access Central at 1-866-658-1221, seven days a week from 9am to 7:45pm for detox, residential addiction services and addiction housing.

1-866-658-1221

For more copies, go online at http://vch.eduhealth.ca or email phec.pychc.ca and quote Catalogue No. DB.500.S34

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What you need to inject safer:

- Sterile needle
- Sterile water
- Alcohol swabs
- Cotton filter or tampon (unscented)
- Cooker or spoon
- Rubber tie
- Lighter or candle
- Ascorbic acid/vitamin C (crack only)
- Clean hands

Your peers created this harm reduction pamphlet for you. Be safe.
How to inject safer

Prepare your drugs – heroin

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol swabs
2. Choose your injection site (lower arm is safest. If you have to inject elsewhere, lower leg then hand are OK)
3. Pour drugs in cooker/spoon
4. Pour sterile water in cooker/spoon
5. Heat until drug becomes liquid
6. Take cotton filter/piece of unscented tampon and place in drugs
7. Place needle in filter
8. Draw liquid into needle
9. Pour sterile water into cooker/spoon
10. Using clean, capped needle, grind crack and ascorbic acid to mix
11. Place cotton filter/piece of unscented tampon in drugs

Prepare your drugs – crack/coke

1. Clean your injection site with an alcohol swab
2. Tie off with a rubber tie using a quick release
3. Pour coke into cooker/spoon
4. Pour in just enough ascorbic acid to dissolve crack
5. If crack mixture is cloudy or has sediment, heat as needed – DO NOT BOIL
6. Insert your needle with the bevel up, at a 30 degree angle towards your head
7. Flag your needle: push needle in a little and pull back on plunger until you see blood in the needle
8. Loosen your tie
9. Inject your drug slowly
10. Pull out and with clean hands, apply pressure to injection site
11. Safely dispose of all equipment – make it your gig to return your rig

Remember:
- Taste your drugs before you use
- Always use with a buddy
- Use a new needle for each injection
- Please don’t break off the tip of your needle or re-cap it – it’s not safe
- Remember: two holes in your arm are better than one in the ground. If you haven’t used in a while, reduce your dose.
- Protect yourself and your community – always dispose of your equipment safely

injecting
- The most dangerous place to inject is your neck
- To make your veins more visible: jog on the spot or do push-ups before tying off
- If you can’t see the bevel, look for the numbers on the side of your needle, they often line up with the bevel

filters
- Unscented tampons are safe to use as filters – do not use cigarette filters
- Use a filter once only – using it more than once can lead to "cotton fever"

ties
- Ties should be on for two minutes maximum
- If your hand falls asleep or arm turns red while tied off, the tie is too tight, or has been on too long

abscesses and wounds
- Keep injection sites clean and watch for abscesses – they can happen anywhere on the body, not just where you inject
- If you have an abscess, do not pop it
- Seek medical care for treatment of abscesses or wounds – they can lead to dangerous infections