

## THE BOTTOM LINE

☀ Use a **BRAND-NEW STERILE SYRINGE** every time you inject or divide drugs.

☀ Clean your skin before injecting. Use plenty of **HOT, SOAPY WATER**.

☀ Use clean water, clean cottons & clean cookers.

☀ If you have any of the symptoms, see a doctor or nurse **FAST**.



## HOW TO USE ALCOHOL PADS:

### Step one:

Take an alcohol pad and wipe back and forth where you plan to inject (this will probably be your arm). You want to press kind of hard this time. Use as many pads as you need to get the dirt off of your skin. But don't stop here! **You're not done!**



### Step two:

Now grab a new pad and press down over the spot where you're going to inject. This time, wipe in a circle. Start with small circles and make bigger circles as you go around. This pushes any leftover dirt and bacteria on your skin outward from the spot where you're going to shoot.



### NOTE:

If you bleed after you shoot, press down with dry cotton or a band-aid to stop the flow. Don't use an alcohol pad; alcohol slows down clotting.

## HEALTHCARE NUMBERS

Alcohol/Drug 24 Hour Helpline (206) 722-3700

ACAP (AIDS Care Access Project) (206) 284-9277

Community Info Line (206) 461-3200

Country Doctor Community Clinic  
(serves Capitol Hill area) (206) 461-4503

45th Street Clinic  
(mostly U-Dist. & Wallingford, but not strict) (206) 633-3350

Harborview Medical Center  
Emergency (206) 731-3074  
Urgent Care (non-emergency) (206) 731-5867

Clinic Information (206) 731-3754

HIV/STD Hotline (King County)  
(confidential information line, referrals for STD & HIV testing) (206) 205-7837 (STDS)  
(800) 678-1595

Needle Exchange  
(medical clinic, locations & hours) (206) 205-7837

Public Health – Seattle & King County  
(referrals for medical and dental) (206) 296-4600

Pike Market Clinic  
(serves mostly downtown) (206) 728-4143

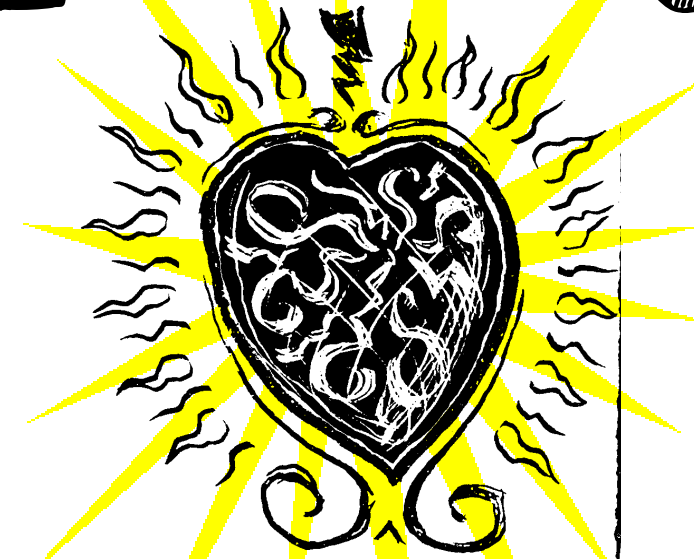
Pioneer Square Clinic (206) 521-1750

Providence Emergency (206) 320-2111



Available in alternative formats.  
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# ENDOCARDITIS



## INFECTION OF THE HEART

## WHAT IS ENDOCARDITIS?

Bacterial endocarditis is an infection in the lining or valves of your heart. In addition to damaging your heart, the infection can travel in your blood to other organs and tissues including your brain, lungs or kidneys.

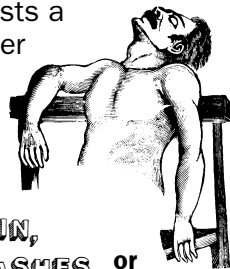
## HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

Bacteria get into your bloodstream and travel to your heart. One way that bacteria get into the blood is by using needles that aren't sterile. Another way is by injecting through skin that has not been thoroughly cleaned. **Don't re-use needles**, even your own. Used needles can easily pick up bacteria that are all around us, all the time.

Even if a new, sterile needle is used, bacteria from the skin can get pushed into your veins. **Before** using a needle, wash your skin carefully with **soap and hot water**. Then wipe the area with alcohol pads.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ENDOCARDITIS?

The main symptom is a **FEVER** that lasts a long time – up to a week or longer. Other symptoms may include **TIREDESS, FEELING LOUSY, SOAKING SWEATS AT NIGHT, BLOOD IN YOUR URINE, STOMACH PAIN, SKIN RASHES, or PAINFUL LUMPS IN YOUR HANDS.**



The symptoms might show up in a couple of days, but also might take a couple of weeks. If you have any of these symptoms, you should talk to a doctor or nurse right away. Symptoms may not mean endocarditis, but you should protect yourself and find out just what is going on. **Don't delay!**



**ENDOCARDITIS CAN KILL YOU IF IT'S NOT PROPERLY TREATED.**



## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE IT?

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR.** There are special blood tests that can find bacteria in the blood. Other tests, such as x-rays and urine tests, can help tell if your heart is involved. These are fairly simple tests, but they require special equipment and are often done in the hospital. They can usually give an answer within a couple of days.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

Treatment usually means 2-4 weeks in the hospital. Antibiotics are given directly into the bloodstream.

**CHANCES OF A CURE ARE VERY GOOD IF IT'S CAUGHT EARLY.**

Sometimes it may be necessary to replace heart valves once the infection has been cleared.

## HOW CAN I AVOID IT?

Be as careful as possible when using needles.

Use **clean water** to mix drugs or rinse needles. **Wash** your hands and the injection site well. Use plenty of **hot, soapy water**. Then use alcohol pads to clean the injection site. Don't lick your skin in the area where you use needles. And don't lick the needle. Normal bacteria in the mouth can cause endocarditis if they get into the blood. Drug injectors are at a very high risk of endocarditis. Even if you've been very careful with needles and cleaning, be aware of the problem. Go to your doctor as soon as you notice any symptoms.

