

WALKING THE **RED** PATH PROJECT



Bienvenue

Pìjàshìg

Weltasualul

Tungasugit

Tansi

Bi-zhaazhig

WELCOME



The Native Women's Association of Canada



NWAC's Mission Statement

Advocate for and inspire Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender Diverse People and Families of many Indigenous Nations.

NWAC's Vision Statement

We envision an inclusive world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse People and their Families.

What is Walking the RED Path?

Re-forging connections,
Empowering Indigenous women to heal, and
Driving change for a healthy future



The project aims to increase your knowledge and awareness of STBBIs and prevent their transmission, while improving access to health, social and support services.

Walking the RED Path Goals

1. Share information about sexually transmitted blood borne infections, HCV, HIV, healthy relationships, sexuality, substance use and Traditional Healing methods.
2. Work together to improve information and materials.
3. Identify needs, supports and services that increases your overall health and well-being.

Group Agreement

1. If the workshop upsets you in any way, you have the right to access an Elder for support or Staff to chat.
2. Listen actively and allows others to speak and express themselves.
3. Ask questions at any time, there is no wrong or silly questions.
4. Refrain from mocking or making fun of somebody else, we are all at different stages of our journey.
5. Respect each other's space and voice.
6. Have fun!

Part 1:

Indigenous Histories & Healthy Relationships



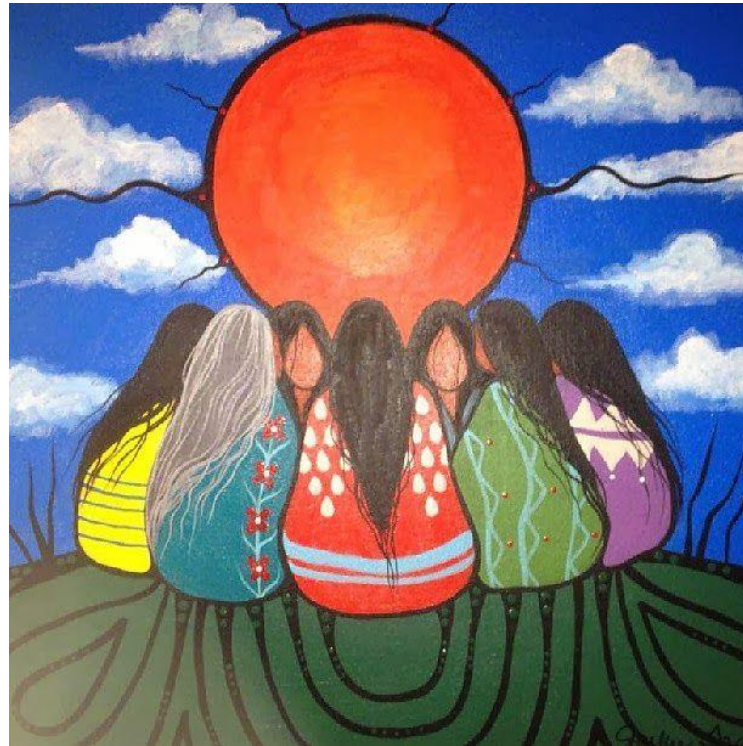
Indigenous

First Nations: refers to both non-status and status People in the place of "band" or "Indian", who are neither Inuit or Métis People. There are more than 630 First Nations communities in Canada.

Inuit: refers to the People who inhabit the North or Arctic Regions. Many Inuit live in 53 communities across Inuit Nunangat.

Métis: refers to the descendants of Indigenous Womxn and European Traders. There are many Metis governments and settlements across Canada.

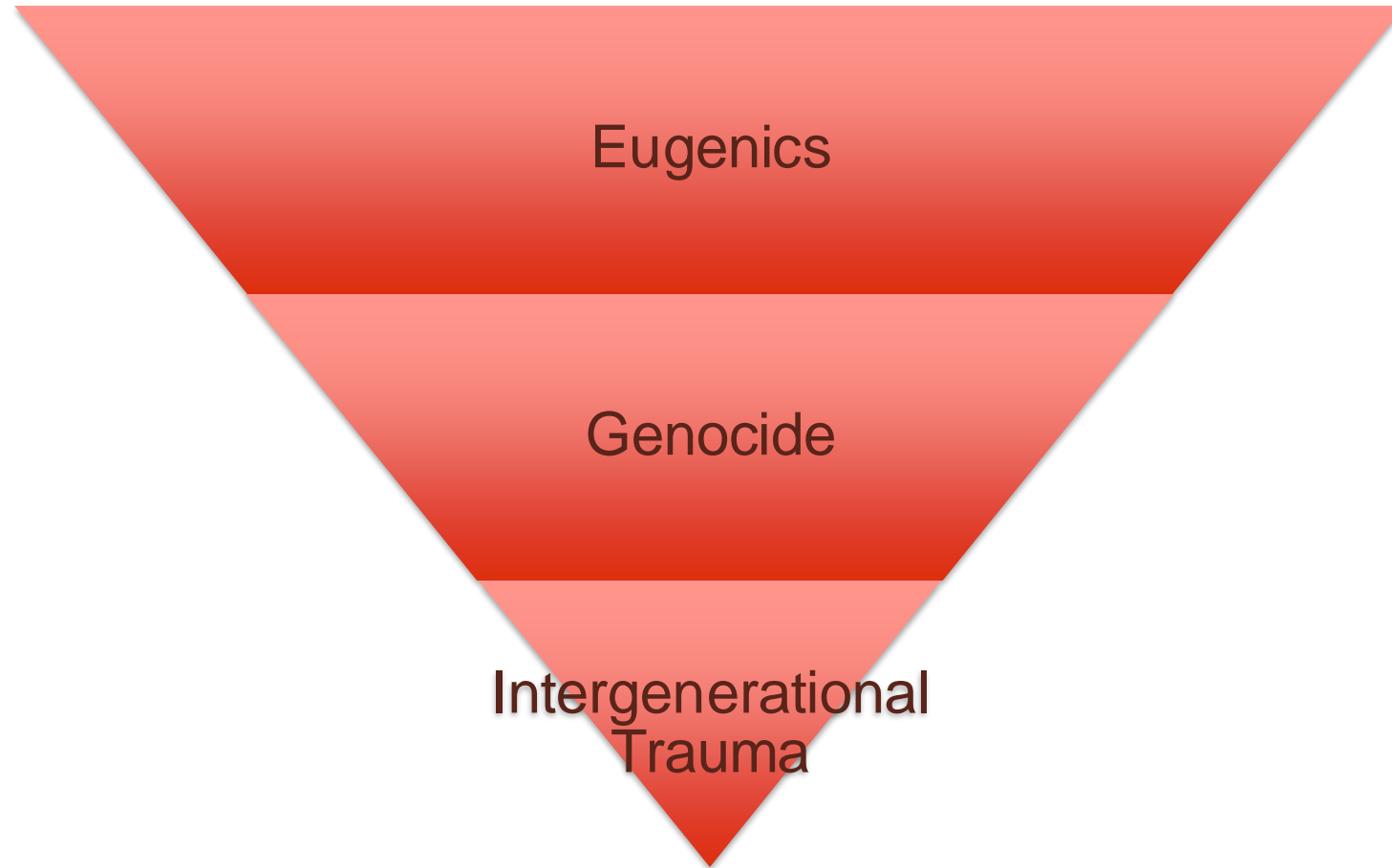
Indigenous Womxn's Issues in Canada



Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit & LGBTQQIA+ People

- Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit & LGBTQQIA+ individuals do not have to lose their Traditional roles and be viewed as less, like colonial practices demonstrate.
- Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Indigenous People must not be disrespected and displaced from their Communities, Languages and Cultures.
- Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit & LGBTQQIA+ individuals have the right to equal opportunities and equitable health outcomes.

Connecting Complex Systems



Eugenics

- Eugenics happens before genocide.
- It is an idea and practice used to eliminate “undesired individuals,” including individuals living with disabilities, those living in poverty, historically excluded groups, with the idea to “better” future generations.
- Eugenics aimed to use "science" for “human improvement” over generations.

Genocide

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report, published in 2015, confronted the painful reality that the Residential School System (and other activities) had inflicted a profound and enduring to cultural genocide..
- The National Report into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn and Girls, completed in 2019, acknowledged the deep trauma and tragic violence that Indigenous Womxn and Girls have endured, framing it as a form of genocide.
 - The Canadian government stated, “[w]e accept their findings, including that what happened amounts to genocide.”
- However, despite this recognition, it remains a disheartening truth that only two of the 231 Calls have been completed, and more than half haven’t even been started, according to CBC’s analysis.

Intergenerational Trauma

- Many Indigenous Individuals may have experiences of Intergenerational Trauma (the accumulation of unresolved and unhealed trauma) that affects both current and future generations.
- Many that have experienced Intergenerational Trauma, may endure mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, disassociation, confusion and symptoms of, or similar to post-traumatic stress.

Intergenerational Trauma



Why are STBBI Rates Higher in Indigenous Populations?

Colonial acts and policies:

- Residential Schools
 - 60s Scoop
 - Genocide & Eugenics
- Indian Act

Loss of Indigenous Culture, Languages and Land

Intergenerational Trauma

- negative impacts on Indigenous Wellbeing

 **Undealt trauma increases rates of STBBIs**

What does healthy sexuality mean to you?

Characteristics of Empowered Sexuality



Honest,
trusting
accepting,
nurturing and
feels safe and
secure.



Empowering,
has boundaries,
is private,
responsible and
enhances your
self esteem and
who you are.



Intimate,
mutual, has
communication
and is an
expression of
love.

Characteristics of Harmful Sexuality



Shameful,
secretive,
compromises
your values,
requires a
double life.

UNSAFE

Addictive,
hurtful, has
no limits,
and/or is
unsafe.



Emotionally
distant, has no
communication,
benefits only
one person, is
power over
someone.



Signs of Unhealthy Relationships

- They want to move too fast and constantly be with you.
- They constantly need to know where you are.
- They get angry/jealous when you socialize without them.
- They say disrespectful things/slurs about you/womxn.
- They find ways you make you feel guilty.
- They constantly call you/blow up when you don't answer right away.
- Blames everyone, makes constant excuses makes you feel like everything is your fault.

Taking back Healthy Relationships

- Discuss boundaries with your partner, tell them how you feel and find a common ground.
- If the boundaries aren't being respected, let them know.
- Once you give them space, tell them officially that you can't continue with your relationship.
- Cut them out, focus on yourself and let their life be theirs.



What does consent mean to you?



Consent

IF IT'S NOT
CLEAR
IT'S NOT
CONSENT

- In relation to sex, consent refers to when one person gives the other permission for a sexual activity.
- Consent can be taken back at ANY time.

Consent



Ask

Ask if you can.



Listen

Listen to their boundaries



Respect

Do what they say, even if they change their mind!

CONSENT

IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA

**Can substances
influence a person's
ability to make decisions?**

Capacity for Consent

When a person seems intoxicated by drugs or alcohol, they do not have the capacity to consent.



What signs might indicate intoxication?

alcohol and consent

**Do you have to get
consent to have sex with
your partner?**

YES

What is Stigma?



- It is a negative stereotype.
- It can discredit an individual or a group of people in the eyes of others.
- Stigma is strongly affected by what society identifies as "wrong" or "bad".

STBBIs are highly stigmatized





Why is Stigma surrounding STBBIs Harmful?



- Fear of testing leading to worsening infection and reduced sexual wellbeing.
- Mental health problems.
- Social withdrawal.
- Lack of knowledge.

Coping

- Trauma  Risky Behaviours
- Risky Behaviours  Risk of STBBIs
- Shame surrounding topics such as sexual health and substance use.
- Substance abuse or risky sex can be harmful to a person's health.



Strength and Resiliency



- Indigenous women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender Diverse people are succeeding, reclaiming their cultures, languages and getting into positions of power while empowering others to overcome these barriers and do the same.

5 MIN BREAK

Part 2:

HIV AND HCV

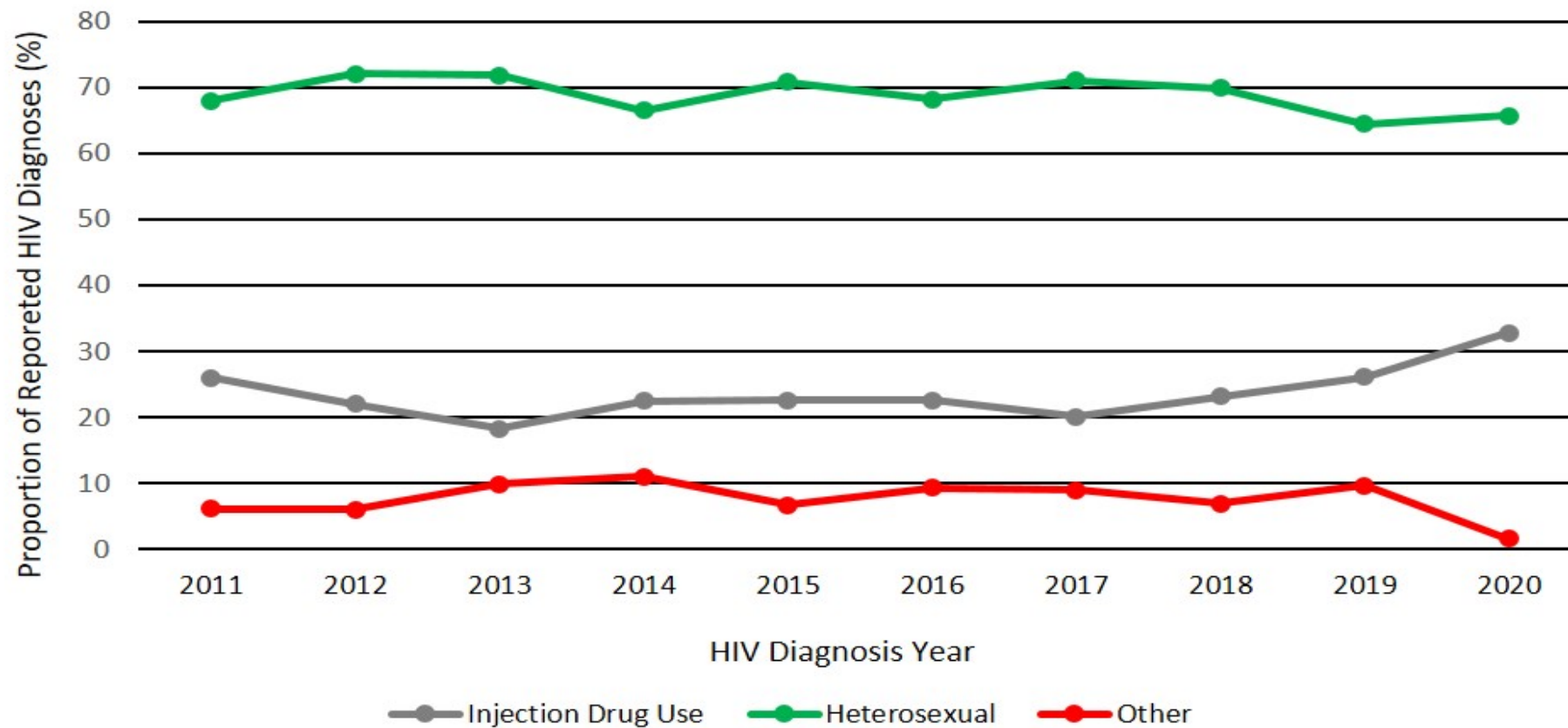


HIV & HCV: Indigenous Populations

- First Nations, Inuit and Metis accounted for **14%** of all new HIV Infections, but only 4.9% of total population in 2020
- Among people living with HIV, approximately **1 in 10** were Indigenous individuals
- The rate of HCV infection among Indigenous people in Canada has been estimated to be **5x** higher than the rest of the population
- Of people living with chronic Hepatitis C (HCV), it is estimated that **1 in 30** Indigenous individuals are affected.

HIV in Canada (2020)

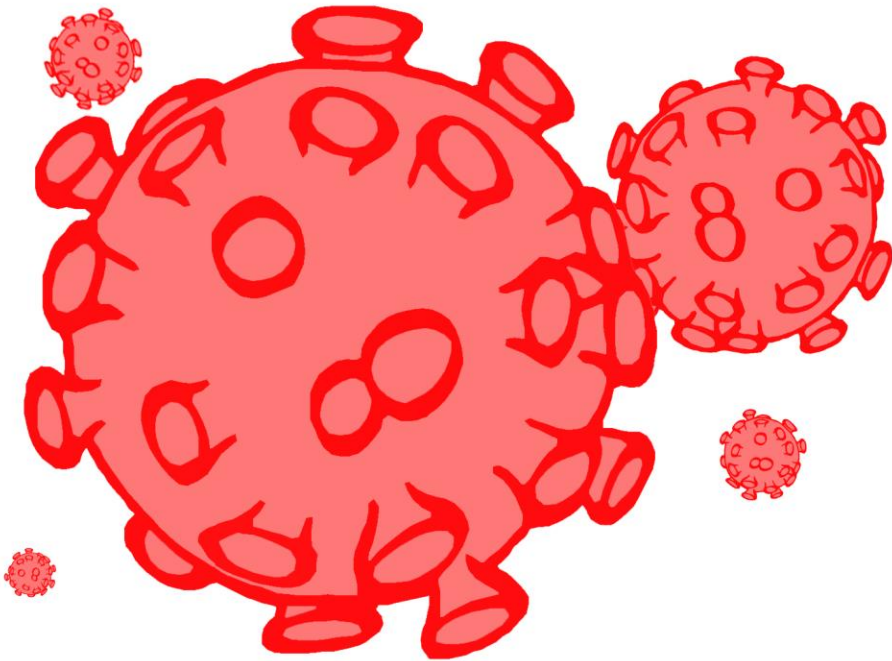
b) Females



HIV & HCV Co-infection

- 62,000 Canadians currently live with HIV (2018).
- 194,000 Canadians currently live with chronic HCV (2018).
- 1 in 8 people living with HIV don't know their status (2018).
- **Co-infection:** living with more than one infection.
- Indigenous People are more likely to have an HIV and HCV Co-infection.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus



- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) weakens the immune system, the body's built-in defense against disease and illness.

Who can get HIV?



Anyone can get HIV

HIV can only be passed by these five body fluids:

- Blood
- Semen (including pre-cum)
- Rectal fluid
- Vaginal fluid
- Breast milk

There are 2 main ways HIV can be passed:

- Sexual acts
- Sharing substance use equipment



HIV can live in dried blood up to 1 week outside the body.

HIV Cannot Spread With:



Insect Bites



Sharing Cutlery



Touching



Toilet Sharing



Kissing

HIV: How do you know if you have it?

Most people do not have symptoms in the first 10-15 years of infection.

Others experience:



fever



chills



rash



rapid weight loss

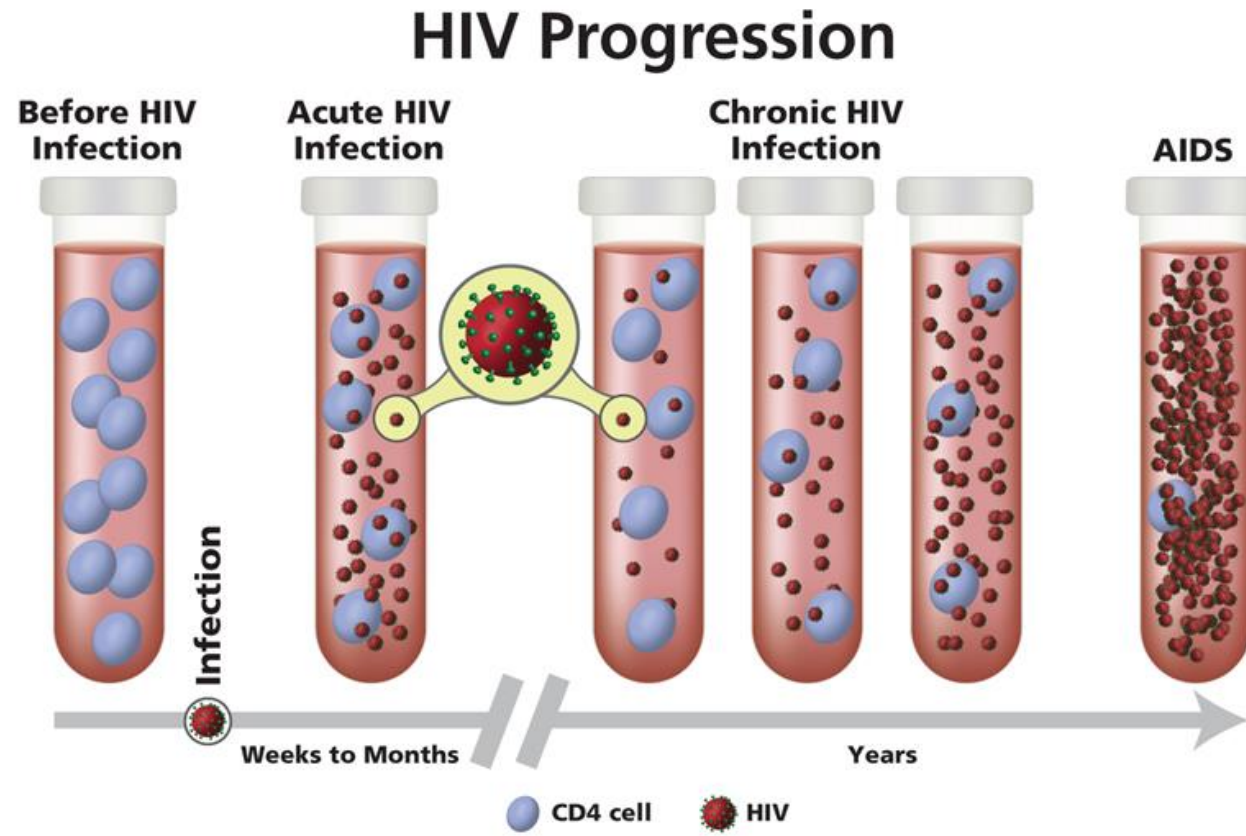


headaches



not feeling hungry (1).

Stages of HIV



HIV: Prevention



**Trust and
Communication**



Condoms



Dental Dams



**Use new syringes or
clean with bleach**



**HIV Testing: know
your status**



**Treatment
including PrEP
and PEP**

PrEP: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis or PrEP is a medication you can take daily to protect yourself from HIV infection.
When would you take it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Before</u> HIV exposure.
Why would you take it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have a sexual partner living with HIV.• If you don't know the status of your sexual partner(s).• If you share drug injection equipment.
How effective is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If taken as prescribed, PrEP can reduce the chance of infection from sexual acts by 90% and from injection use by 70%.

PeP: Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

What is PeP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-Exposure Prophylaxis or PeP is a medication you can take to prevent infection of HIV
When would you take it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>After</u> HIV Exposure
Why would you take it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In emergency situations• If you have experienced sexual assault• If you don't know the status of the person you had sex with• Shared injection equipment with someone
How effective is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If taken properly, PeP can prevent HIV infection, but it is not always effective. The sooner you take PeP (within 72 hours), it has better chances of being effective

HIV: When to get Tested



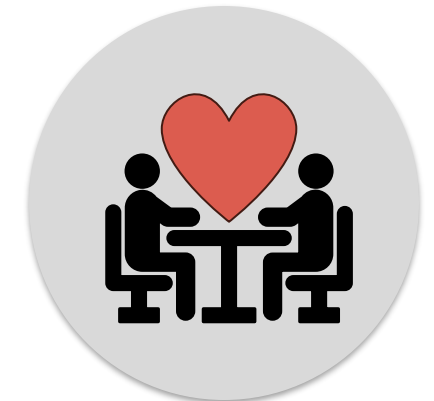
Had sex without a protective barrier.



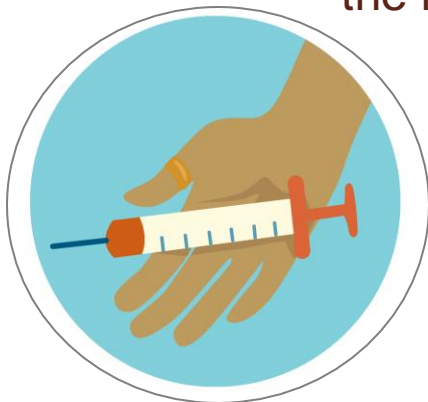
Had sex while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



Tested positive for another STBBI.



New Sexual Partner.



Shared needles or other drug use equipment.



Had tattooing, piercing or acupuncture with unsterilized equipment.



Had a blood transfusion or received other blood products before 1986.

Methods for HIV Testing

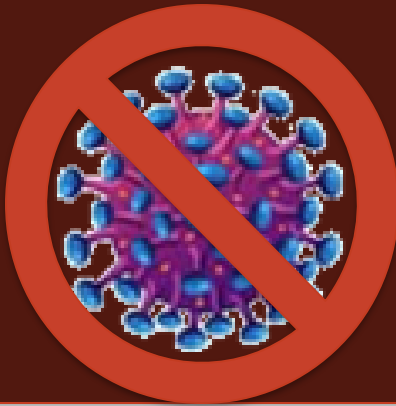
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graph TD; A[Methods for HIV Testing] --> B[Confirmatory Testing]; A --> C[Rapid Testing (Point-of-care testing & Self-testing)]; A --> D[Lab Testing];
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Confirmatory Testing

**Rapid Testing
(Point-of-care testing
& Self-testing)**

Lab Testing

HIV Treatment



HIV medication cannot cure HIV; but they help people with HIV live longer, healthier lives and reduce the risk of HIV transmission.



People with HIV take a combination of medications, often in one pill, 1-2 times a day for the rest of their lives.

Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

- ART is extremely effective in treating HIV+ individuals.
- Uses a combination of several medicines.
- Goal is to reduce the amount of the virus in the body (viral load) so that it is undetectable in current blood tests.
- Resistance (less responsive to treatment)



HIV Treatment

Undetectable = Un-transmittable = good news

No/Irregular
Treatment →
↑ viral load =
transmittable



Treatment →
↓ viral load =
undetectable =
un-transmittable

Pregnancy and HIV

- If you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, get tested for HIV.
- There is a risk of transmission of HIV through chest/breast feeding.
- It is recommended to feed your baby formula instead.
- If you are HIV+ it is possible to have a baby without passing on the HIV to them.
- Without proper treatment, HIV can be passed from a pregnant person to their baby.



Pregnancy Procedure:

1

Taking HIV treatment **BEFORE** you get pregnant, during pregnancy and labour.

2

Having vaginal delivery.

3

Giving HIV medication to your child for a short time after birth.

4

Baby formula instead of breast/chest feeding, still a risk even if you are undetectable.

Chest Feeding: Current Guidelines (2025)

1

Informed
Decision Making

2

Risk of
Transmission

3

Monitoring and
Support

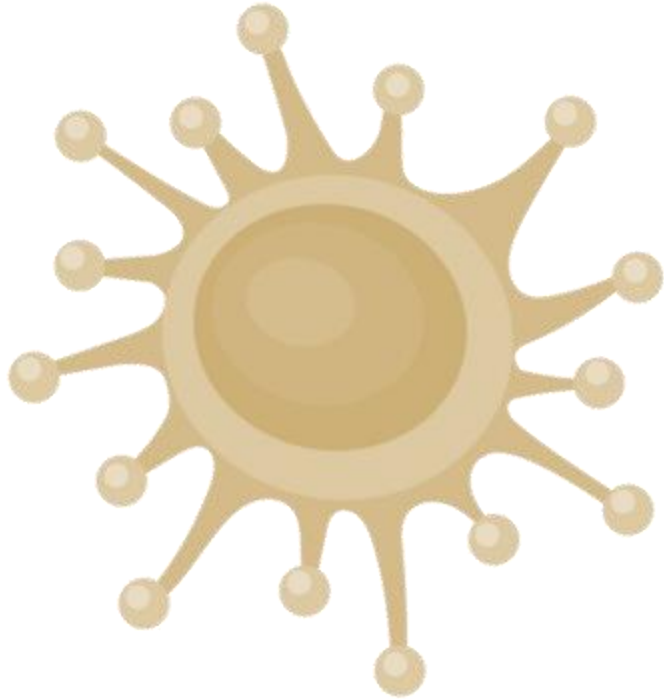
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Infant
Prophylaxis

5

Cultural and
Personal
Considerations

Hepatitis C (HCV)



- Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes your liver to swell.
- Hep C attacks the liver and can lead to a mild, short-term illness or a lifelong, life-threatening illness.

(CATIE, n.d.-a)

Who can get Hepatitis C?



Anyone can get HCV

How Can Someone Get HCV?



**Sharing
Injecting Equipment**



**Tattoos or Body
Piercing with
Unsterilized Needles**



**Sex Without
Protection**



**Sharing Personal
Hygiene Items**



**Pregnancy, Childbirth
& Breastfeeding**

HCV is NOT Passed By:



Kissing



Toilet Sharing



Hugging



Sweat



Sharing Cutlery



**Sneeze and
Coughs**

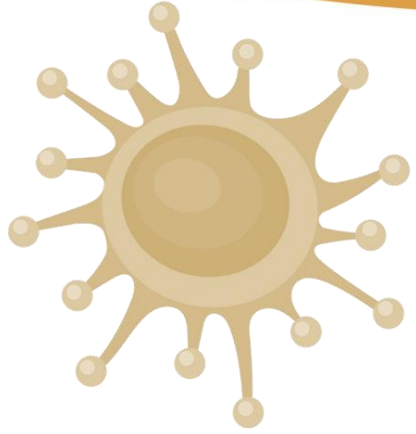


Insect Bites



Bathing

Unless blood is present



**Did you know:
Many people who get Hepatitis C
don't know they have it.**

How do you know if you have HCV?

Some people do not have any symptoms and can live with hepatitis C without knowing it.

Others experience:



fever



fatigue



poor appetite



yellowish discoloration of their eyes and skin



dark urine



weight loss (11).

Prevention

- Never share needles.
- Avoid direct exposure to blood.
- Don't share personal care items.
- Don't share tattoo and piercing equipment.
- Practice safe sex.



HCV: Prevention



**Trust and
Communication**



Condoms



Dental Dams



**Use new syringes or
clean with Bleach**



**Don't use a needle
or ink that other
people have used**



**Don't share body
jewelry or personal
hygiene products**

Hepatitis C and Testing



- Testing is done 3-6 months after exposure.
- Takes 2 blood tests to confirm infection.

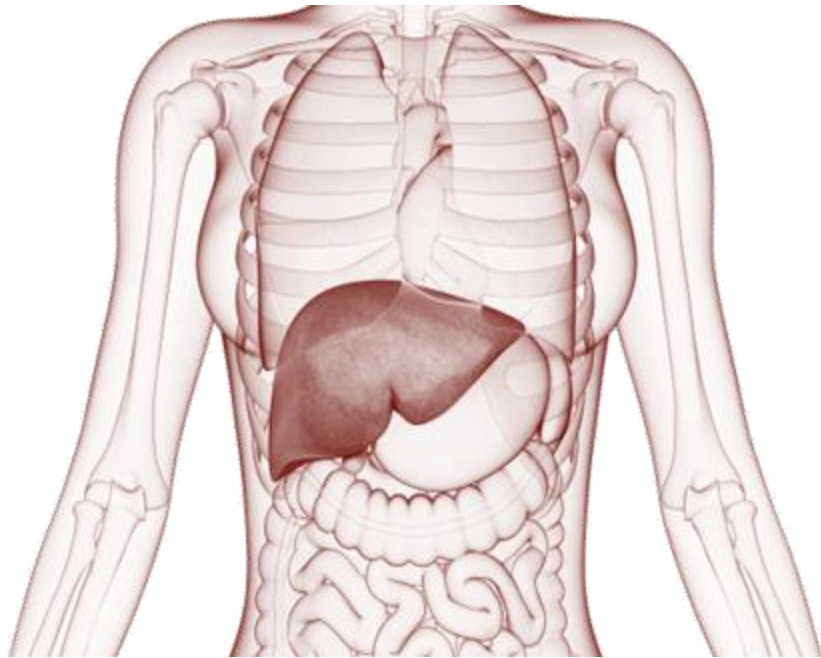
How to get testing

If you want to be tested, ask to see a healthcare professional for testing.

If you think you have been exposed to HIV/HCV, ask to see a healthcare professional for testing.

If you do not know your status, ask to see a healthcare professional for testing.

Hepatitis C and Treatment



- Treatment **cures** almost all cases of Hepatitis C.
- To treat HCV you take 1-2 pills a day for 8-12 weeks.
- Lifelong infection can lead to liver damage/failure, and death.

HCV and Pregnancy

- HCV can be passed from the pregnant person to their baby – **in 5%-6% of cases.**
- The risk of transmission is **higher** if the pregnant person is also living with HIV – about **10% higher (double)**



HCV and Breastfeeding/Chest feeding



- Chest feeding if you have HCV is generally **safe**.
- It is not advised to chest feed if you have cracked or bleeding nipples.

HCV Summary

- There is no vaccine for HCV, but there are ways to prevent it.
- With treatment most cases are **curable**.
- There is a 5-6% chance of a pregnant person passing HCV to their child, double with HIV co-infection
- Need two tests for accurate results.
- It's possible to have HCV without having symptoms.
- Some people can cure it on their own
- It is always possible to get it again.

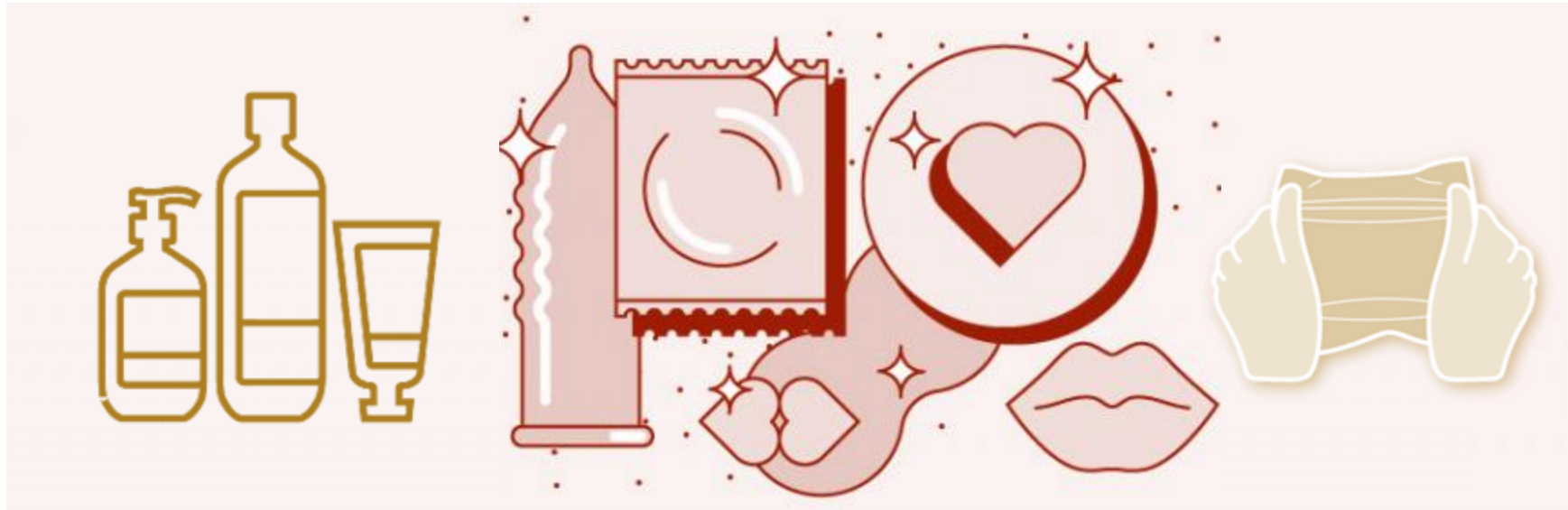
BREAK

Part 3:

STBBI Prevention and Harm Reduction



What is Safer Sex?



Safer sex methods include using condoms, dental dams or outercourse (mutual masturbation and dry humping).

Safer Sex Options

- Reach out to Health Services to access condoms, dental dams and gloves.
- Wash sex toys and hands thoroughly before and after engaging in sexual acts.
- If you think you have come into contact with an STBBI, seek treatment and **stop** sexual acts to stop spread.
- Mutual masturbation (masturbating with your partner instead of touching your partner) is a safer sex option.

Womxn Who Have Sex With Womxn

Womxn who have sex with womxn may be at risk for STBBIs by having unprotected sex, oral sex, fingering or by sharing sex toys.



Sharing Sex Toys

- Use condoms and change them when switching partners or penetrative acts.
- Clean your toys between use with toy cleaner or hot antibacterial soapy water.
- Porous toys can never be 100% cleaned.



Tattooing & Piercings



Using unsterile equipment for tattooing/body piercing puts you at risk of STBBIs.



Don't use a needle or ink that other people have used.



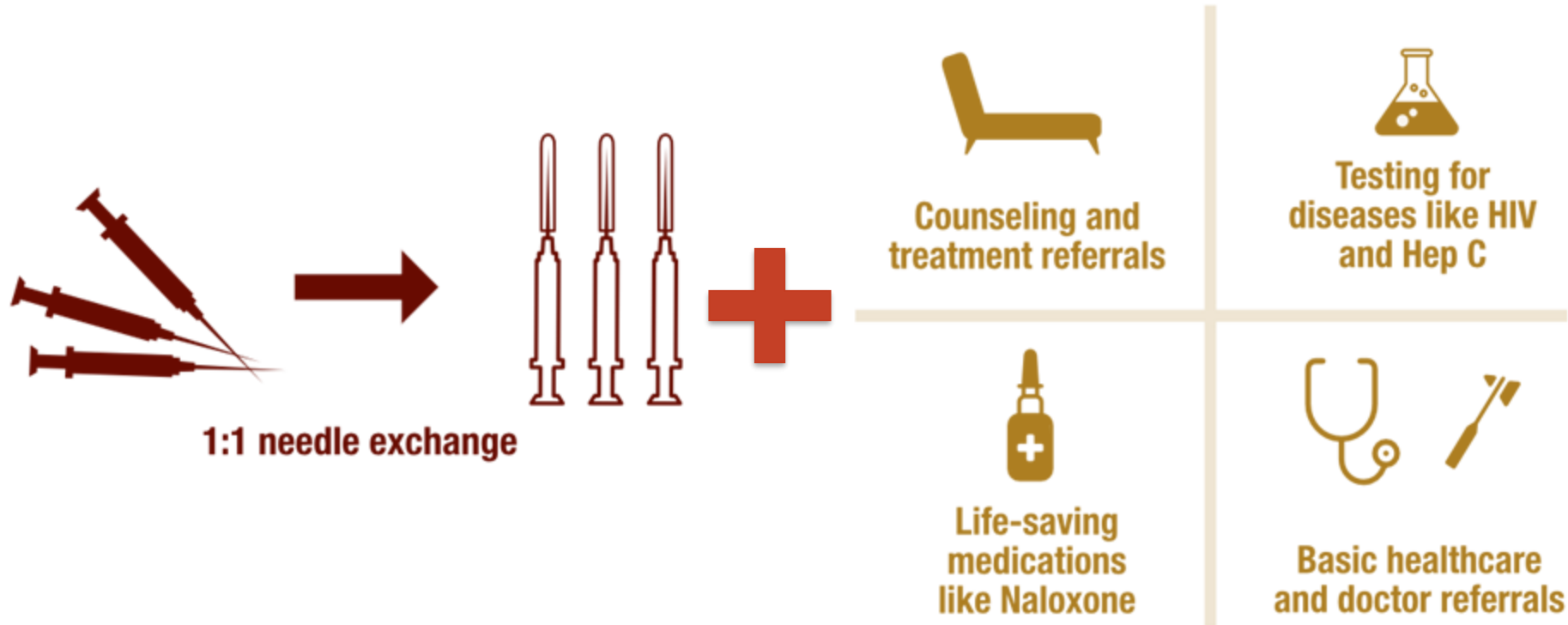
Don't share body jewelry.

Harm Reduction



- Focuses on ways of minimizing the potential for harm through non-judgmental strategies.
- Needle exchange programs, safe sex, opioid replacement therapy are all examples of harm reduction.

Needle Exchange Programs



Needle Exchange Program in CSC

- To access the Needle Exchange Program in CSC, you must meet with Health Services.
- A healthcare professional will meet with you and provide information on substance use, safe consumption practises and other information regarding your health.
- They will also be able to provide a referral to other services.
- You have to undergo an assessment called a 'threat risk assessment' before beginning the program.
- You have to sign a contract acknowledging that you accept the rules of the program before beginning the program.

Needle Exchange: Benefits



Improves health outcomes by:

- ↓ Drug overdoses.
- ↓ Transmission rates of Blood Borne Infections.
- ↑ Referrals to drug treatment programs.

Needle Exchange DOES NOT



- Endanger the safety of others.
- ↑ substance use or rates of injecting drugs.

Safe Consumption Sites



Connect people who use drugs to treatment and health services.



Reduces fatal overdoses.



Reduce the transmission of HIV and HCV.



Reduce public safety concerns such as public intoxication and discarded needles.

Needle Bleaching

- It can lower the risk of HIV and HCV
- It is **NOT 100%** effective



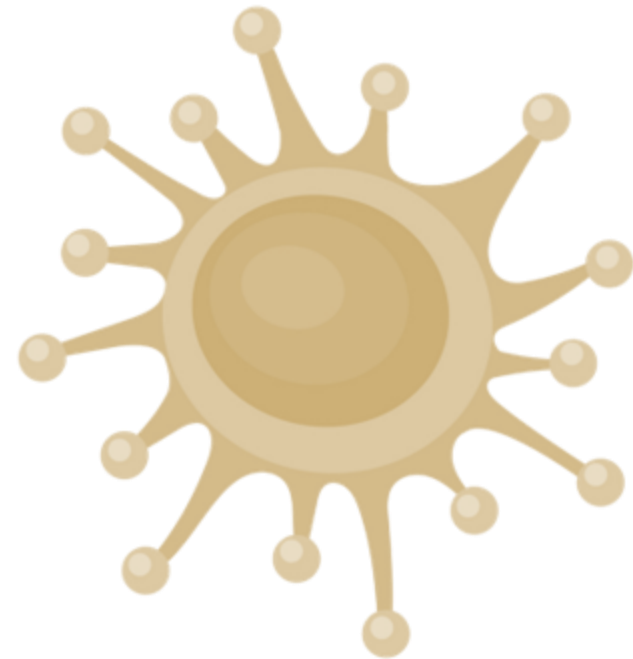
Why Bleach?

HIV can live for up to:

- 1 week in dried blood.
- 42 days inside a syringe.

HCV can live for up to:

- 6 weeks in dried blood.
- 63 days inside a syringe.



When to use Bleach

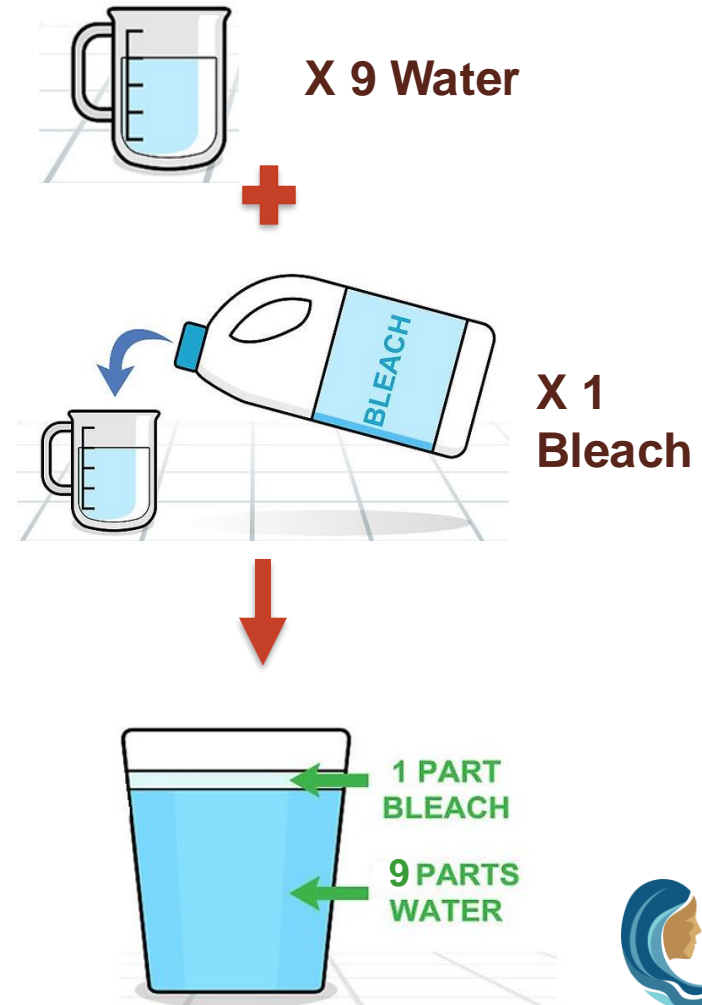
- Sharing needles
 - Tattooing
 - Piercing
 - Drug use
- Sharing inhalational equipment



How to Use the Bleach Kit

Tattoo Machine

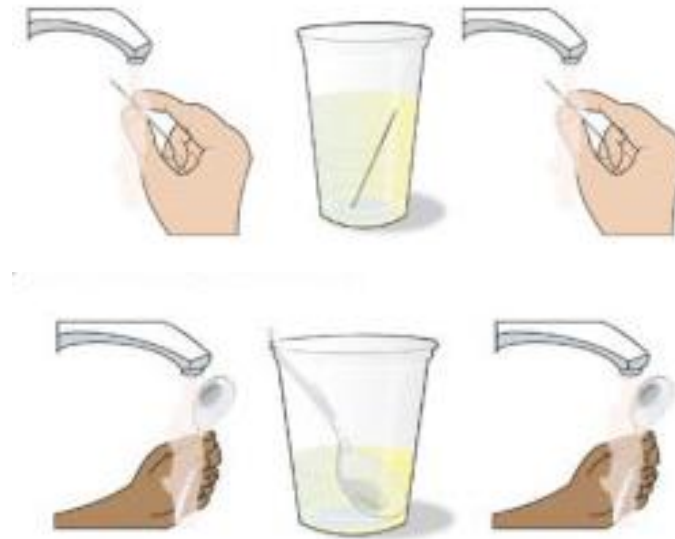
1. Take the tattoo machine apart (if possible)
2. Rinse with cold water
3. Use 1-part bleach to 9-parts water, wipe/rinse parts
4. Rinse again with cold water



How to Use the Bleach Kit

Tattoo/Piercing Needle or Shared cooker (spoon, bottle cap)

1. Rinse under cold water.
2. Soak in a glass of bleach for 2 minutes.
3. Rinse again with cold water.



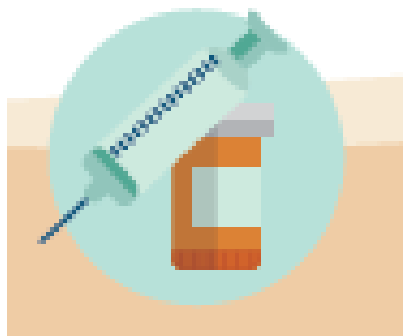
How to Use the Bleach Kit Injection Syringe



Tap or shake the
syringe for 30 seconds.



x 2



HARM REDUCTION ↓ STBBI's



Ashley Smoke
Asmoke@nwac.ca

Elizabeth Virkutis
Evirkutis@nwac.ca

Email Redpath@nwac.ca with
artwork, writing or poetry.



Haw'aa!

Wel'alin!

Miigwetch!

Qujannamiik!

Merci!

Thank you!

Nakurmiik!