



# MAKE SMART INJECTION CHOICES

HOW COLLECTIVE ACTION  
BY CITIZENS CAN HELP  
MAKE INJECTIONS SAFE



For Civil Societies



World Health  
Organization

# SAFE INJECTION CHOICES MATTER

Safe injections are important to protect health and treat diseases, but many injections around the world are not needed or can be unsafe. Unsafe injections **put lives at risk** and every year they cause:

- nearly 1.7 million hepatitis B infections.
- more than 315 000 hepatitis C infections.
- almost 34 000 human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is working to ensure that all injections are safe by asking health care providers to think carefully about when and how to give injections, including using syringes that cannot be re-used.



## SAFE INJECTIONS: A CALL-TO-ACTION

### How can you help to promote safe injections in your community?

- Understand how injections can be unsafe and draw up a plan to raise awareness about how to avoid the risks.
- Speak with your community leaders to find out what the government is doing to avoid unsafe injections.
- Draw up leaflets, posters and social media posts (or use/adapt WHO materials) to educate others in your community to ask for safe injections and to know that injections are not always necessary.
- Organise training for people in your community to empower them to ask health workers if treatments can be given by mouth instead of injections and to recognize when an injection is given safely.
- Work with injection manufacturers on a joint awareness campaign highlighting that if an injection is necessary, a new syringe and needle should always be used.
- Call for training to be made available for health workers on how to avoid unnecessary injections.
- Get in touch with clinics in your community and demand that they dispose of syringes and needles safely.

# HOW CAN AN INJECTION BE UNSAFE?

## UNSAFE INJECTION PRACTICES

- ✗ Giving unnecessary injections for illnesses for which tablets and syrups are the recommended first-line treatment.
- ✗ Re-using syringes to save money.
- ✗ Re-using syringes because of shortages.
- ✗ Disposing unsafely of used syringes and needles.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

- Patients who receive unsafe injections.
- Health care workers who get injured by used needles while giving injections.
- Children in the community who play near areas where syringes and needles have been thrown away.



# STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

## WORKING TOGETHER

You can play a key role by meeting with patients, providers, and policymakers to educate them about safe injections, and what they can do to stop infections and injuries from unsafe injections.



With your help, we can all work towards a world where:

- ✓ Injections are only given when necessary, and oral medication is given instead, where appropriate.
- ✓ Health workers have clean and hygienic conditions for giving injections.
- ✓ All health care programmes switch to syringes that cannot be used more than once.
- ✓ Tablets and syrups are made more available.
- ✓ Hospitals and clinics have safe ways of disposing of used syringes and needles.

For further information please visit: [www.who.int/infection-prevention](http://www.who.int/infection-prevention)