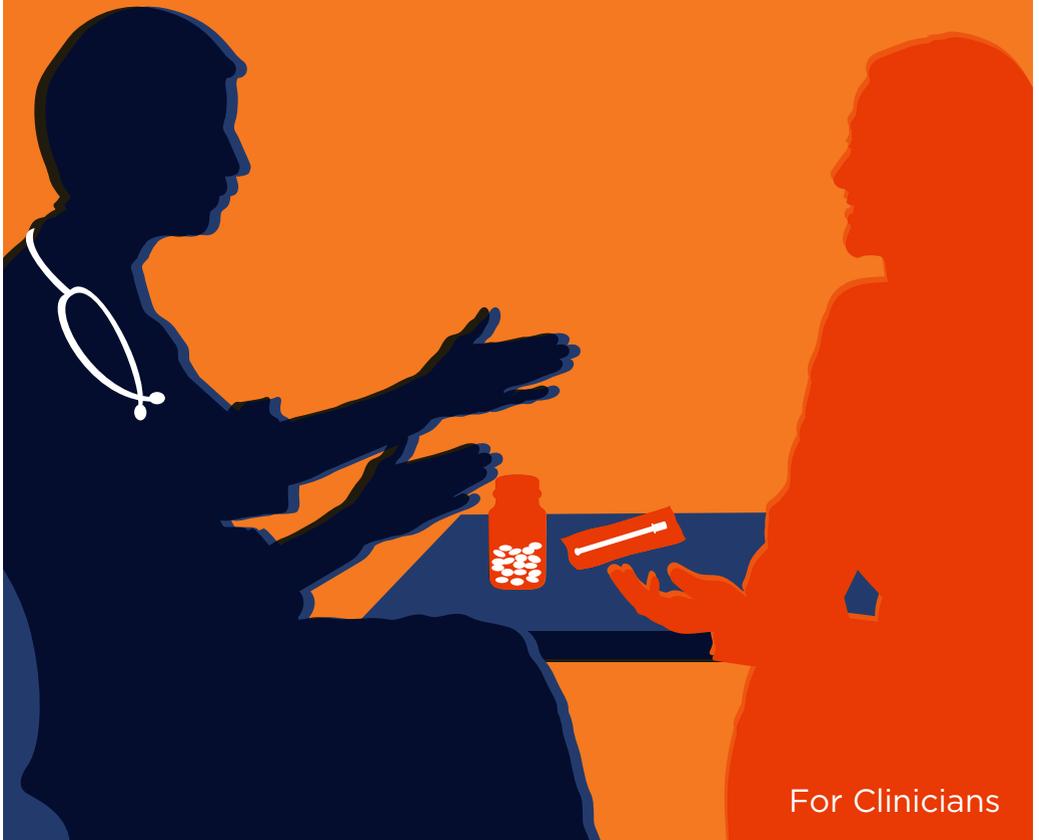




MAKE SMART INJECTION CHOICES

ENSURING EVERY INJECTION
IS A SAFE INJECTION



For Clinicians



World Health
Organization

MAKING SAFE INJECTION CHOICES



Over-use of injections is common globally and can be replaced with medications taken by mouth.

Unsafe health care injections explain 1.67 million hepatitis B infections, up to 315 120 hepatitis C infections and up to 33 877 human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections.^{1,2}

The World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines recommend rational use of injections, safe injection practice and the use of safety-engineered syringes for all injections.

Physicians and health care providers have a key role to play in the implementation of the guidelines and in turn, reducing unnecessary injections and infections.

TALKING TO YOUR PATIENTS

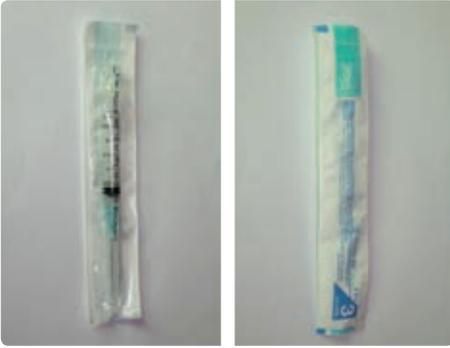
In most countries, physicians may assume that their patients expect or prefer injections. However, research shows that this expectation/preference is greatly overestimated. In fact, patients often think injections are stronger medicines because they are used to their physicians or

health care workers prescribing them. Doctors can build their patients' confidence by explaining that they do not need an injection and that oral medications are just as effective. Patients trust their doctor when the treatment prescribed is explained to them.

1. Pepin et al. *Evolution of the global use of unsafe medical injections, 2000-2010*. PLoS One. 2013 Dec 8;12:e80948.

2. Pepin et al. *Evolution of the global burden of viral infections from unsafe medical injections, 2000-2010*. PLoS One. 2014 Jun 9;9(6):e99677.

HOW CAN AN INJECTION BE UNSAFE?



UNSAFE INJECTION PRACTICES

The global burden of unsafe injection practices is caused by avoidable practices including:

- ❌ Re-use of syringes and/or needles.
- ❌ Overuse of injections for illnesses treatable with oral medications and recommended as first-line treatment.
- ❌ Needle-stick injuries to health care workers from recapping needles.
- ❌ Lack of clean work spaces.
- ❌ Re-use because of shortage of supply of sterile single-use syringes for injections.
- ❌ Unsafe sharps collection and waste management.

PREVENTION IS BEST

One of the most effective ways to prevent injection-associated infections is to reduce the number of injections administered.

Most oral medications (e.g., antibiotics, vitamins, painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs) are absorbed well and rapidly in the digestive tract. In addition, clinical trials show that for most common conditions the use of injections is not associated with higher cure rates or with faster healing.

Injections should only be prescribed when medically indicated, and administered in a way that does not endanger the patient, the injection provider or the community. In most cases, injections should only be used:

- ✅ For serious and life-threatening illness where they are recommended by treatment guidelines.
- ✅ When patients are unable to swallow.
- ✅ When patients vomit profusely.
- ✅ When there is no effective oral agent or when the absorption pattern is significantly altered.

PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

SAFETY FIRST

In addition to the rational use of injections in treatment and provision of oral medication where appropriate, all prescribers have a responsibility to ensure that the injections they prescribe are given with a re-use prevention (RUP) syringe, as recommended by the WHO.

Hundreds of thousands of people could be protected from infections acquired through unsafe injections by using syringes that cannot be used more than once. By following these simple rules, we can all work together to ensure the risks of unsafe injections are reduced.



For further information please visit: www.who.int/infection-prevention



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