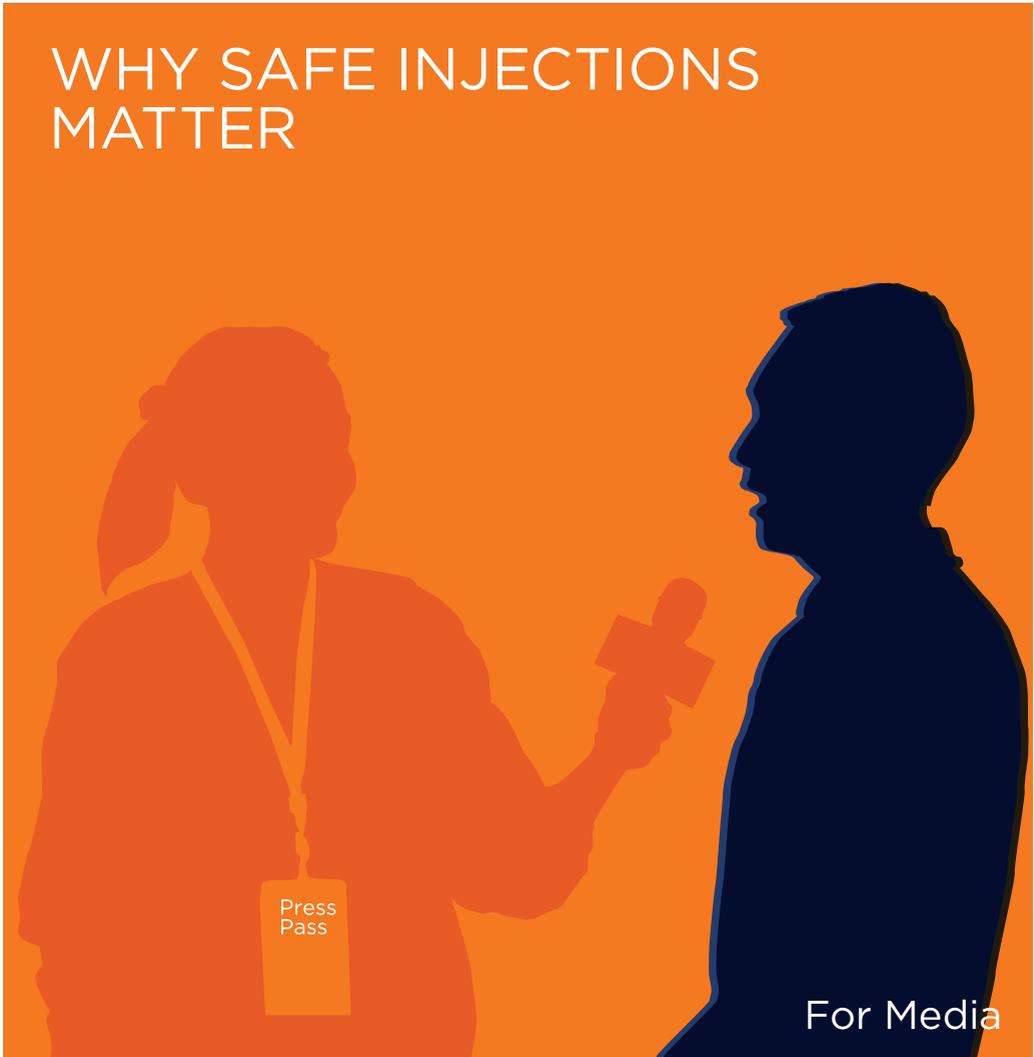




MAKE SMART INJECTION CHOICES

WHY SAFE INJECTIONS MATTER



For Media



World Health Organization

SAFE INJECTION CHOICES MATTER



Every year hundreds of thousands of people receive unnecessary or unsafe injections.

Safe injections are important to protect human health and treat diseases. However, of the **16 billion injections** given globally every year, in some countries up to 70% are unnecessary or could be replaced by oral medication. Many of these injections are given with unsafe practices and can transmit dangerous infections, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

To improve the safety of injections around the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a global injection safety campaign called **'Get the Point' - Make smart injection choices**, calling for everyone involved in the prescription, supply, provision and administration of injections to make smart injection choices.

WHO THE CAMPAIGN TARGETS

Audiences include:

- Injection providers
- Policy-makers
- Patients
- The community

WHAT THE CAMPAIGN DOES

Raises awareness about the risks of unsafe injections and promotes safe injection practices.

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN AIM

To ensure that all injections given are actually necessary, and will not harm the recipient, expose the provider to any avoidable risk or result in waste that is dangerous to the community.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- International, national and local media are important allies in helping to tell the story about why safe injections matter. They provide accurate information and can advocate for safe injection practices.
- By reporting on essential health information provided by public health authorities through a variety of channels, the media expands audience reach and provides an essential link between all stakeholders including policymakers, health care workers and the general public.

HOW CAN AN INJECTION BE UNSAFE?

UNSAFE INJECTION PRACTICES

Unsafe injections are due to avoidable situations and practices including:

- ❌ Lack of awareness of unsafe injections.
- ❌ Over-use of injections for illnesses for which oral medications are available and recommended as first line treatment.
- ❌ Lack of clean work spaces.
- ❌ Re-use of syringes and/or needles, and other injection equipment.
- ❌ Unsafe collection and disposal of used injection equipment.



SAFETY FIRST

WHO champions smart injection choices and recommends that injections only be given when an equivalent oral medication is not available or is not recommended by treatment guidelines. If an injection is necessary, **WHO recommends the exclusive use of safety-engineered syringes that have mechanisms preventing re-use of the device and/or protecting the health care worker from needle-stick injuries.**

Making smart injection choices will significantly reduce or rule out the risk of deadly infections or other complications that may result from unsafe injections. Adhering to safe injection practices will protect patients, health care workers and communities.



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

WORKING TOGETHER

Working together means action by multiple stakeholders, including governments, ministers of health, policy-makers, care providers, equipment manufacturers and other partners, as well as patients and the wider public.

Media can play a crucial role in reaching the campaign's audiences. Key messages that you could communicate to the various stakeholders when writing about injection safety include:

- ✓ **Patients:** Ask if there is an oral alternative available, or if an injection is needed.
- ✓ **Health care providers:** Use re-use prevention syringes and needles and other equipment from new, sealed and undamaged packs.
- ✓ **Ministries of Health:** Train health care workers in administering injections and following safe hygiene standards, including a clean workspace, performing hand hygiene and skin disinfection and following safe disposal practices.
- ✓ **Industry:** Support safe injection programmes and work with

governments to ensure access to, and supply of, safety-engineered injection devices.

- ✓ **Donors:** Support governments in the initial steps to procure safety-engineered syringes and then to implement new injection safety action.

By continuing to highlight and report on positive injection safety measures, we can all work together to avoid the risks of unsafe injections.

STORY IDEAS

1. Find out how many people in your country are infected, and health workers injured, by contaminated syringes and needles every year. Tell their stories.
2. Ask whether safety-engineered syringes are available to health providers wherever injections are given, and if not, why not?
3. Ask what measures your government is taking to ensure all injections are safe.

For further information and access to educational materials please visit:

www.who.int/infection-prevention



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