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Safety Guidelines for Injecting Hormones

Important Information to Avoid Infection

from Trans-Health.com

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The following article is provided for information purposes only. The Gender Centre strongly recommends that hormones administered by injections are best done under medical supervision. If you are contemplating self-administering please consult your physician first to ensure your safety.

Hormones are to be injected only into the thigh or buttock muscle. When injecting, be careful of nerves, veins and bones. The buttock is the most common place people inject. You can switch buttock cheeks to avoid bruises and sores. After you inject into these muscles, you might be sore for a day or two.

Do not inject more than the prescribed amount: it will not speed up your treatment process. You can cause serious liver damage and increase the risk of blood clots. Blood clots can appear in the veins of the legs and can travel to the lungs. This is called pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal. People who smoke cigarettes and inject hormones are more likely to develop pulmonary embolism.

Most doctors recommend 1cc to be injected once a month and in some selected cases, twice a month. This will depend on the type of hormones and concentration. If you do not have a doctor, see one before you start hormone therapy treatments. Referrals can be made to doctors who specialize in providing health care to the transgender community.

Needles and syringes are to be used one time only. Never share your needles with anyone. If a new sterile syringe is not available the next time you inject, always clean it first. To clean your syringe, do the following:

- Rinse the syringe with water three times;
- bleach three times (keep bleach in syringe for at least thirty seconds and shake each time); and then rinse with water three times.

When injecting hormones follow these helpful steps to avoid H.I.V. and other serious infections:

- Clean the top of the bottle with an alcohol prep pad.
- Fill the syringe with the amount of air equal to the amount of hormones you will be injecting. If you inject 1cc of hormones put in 1cc of air. This makes it easier to get hormones out of the bottle.
- Insert needle into the bottle, turn the bottle upside down, and push air into the bottle. To fill the syringe with hormones, pull the plunger down so the top of the plunger lines up with the 1cc mark on the side of the syringe.
- Pull needle out of bottle, tap syringe with your finger to make any air bubbles in the syringe rise to the top. Push out all the excess air with a little dribble of hormones to make sure there is not air in the needle.
- Now your syringe is filled with hormones. Put the cap back on the needle while you choose and prepare the injection site.
- If you do inject into muscles below the waist you can reduce the risk by picking a site about fifteen centimetres below your hips and fifteen centimetres above your knee (that is about halfway between your hip and knee) on the outer side of the leg.
- Keep the limb straight and as relaxed as possible.
- Clean the injection site with a single wipe with a new swab.
- Holding the barrel of the syringe, push the needle in with one swift jab. Not quite up to the hilt.
- Draw back. If you get blood in the syringe, you have hit a vein or an artery. Pull the needle back a centimetre and try again.
- Provided the syringe remains free of blood inject slowly and continue to keep the limb relaxed. Intra muscular injecting requires longer needles at least 2.5 centimetres long; 23 gauge and 21 gauge are both suitable.
- Bring back all used syringes to the Gender Centre for exchange for new ones.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.