**Reduction of harm**

The advice and information given to drug users on reducing harm and minimising risks is not condoning drug use, but is a way of protecting users, their families and the wider community from the more serious health consequences of using.

Advice/information includes:

* Injecting is the most dangerous way to take drugs. If possible, smoke or swallow substances instead.
* Never mix substances.
* If injecting, use clean needles, syringes, filters, spoons, water, ascorbic/citrus acid, and mixing equipment. Never share these with anyone.
* Use the smallest needle, and the least amount of water to inject. Dispose of used equipment carefully. Get a sharps box from your drug service.
* Take your drugs with other people around (hopefully friends), so they can call for help should you get into trouble.
* Prepare your hit on something you can throw away.
* If you notice bruising or swelling after injecting seek medical help.
* If you hit an artery instead of a vein, blood will rush into the syringe. DO NOT INJECT. Remove the needle and apply pressure to the site. Seek medical help.
* Avoid using cans to smoke from, as they pollute your lungs. Use glass pipes instead.
* Take regular breaks if dancing after taking ecstasy, and drink a pint of water an hour (only if dancing).
* Try to eat regular meals.
* Maintain a regular sleep pattern if possible (drugs often produce insomnia).
* Ask your G.P. for the Hepatitis A and B vaccines.
* Keep substances and equipment out of the reach of children.
* Use the free needle exchange service.
* Educate yourself on your drug of choice and know the risks.
* Never take substances in a dangerous place (e.g. near water, traffic etc).
* Follow basic home and personal safety principles when you are using or not (e.g. contraception, fire prevention etc).