



**KEEP
CALM
AND
REDUCE
HARM**



**Mirror,
Mirror on the
wall, who is the
veinest of them all?**

20th Anniversary Edition
1993-2013

*A Royal High-ness
Safety Guide*
for Kings (and Queens)
who use crystal



By Project NEON

A program of Seattle Counseling Service

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NEON is an HIV-prevention program for gay, bi, and trans guys affected by crystal methamphetamine. Based on the principles of harm reduction, NEON includes peer education; one-on-one counseling; health education; referrals; advocacy; outreach and engagement; and social marketing interventions.

NEON's goals are to:

- ✦ Increase the use of sterile syringes among gay, bi, and trans men who inject crystal, and promote consistent condom use for anal sex.
- ✦ Provide accurate and truthful information about how crystal affects the body and mind, provide options for reducing sexual and drug using risks associated with crystal, and provide free help to better manage or stop crystal use.
- ✦ Change community norms regarding the use of crystal methamphetamine among gay, bi, and trans men who use crystal.
- ✦ Decrease or discontinue crystal methamphetamine use among gay, bi, and trans men who use crystal.

Visit us online at projectNEON.org, or call 206.323.1768 for more information. All NEON services are FREE.

For more information about Seattle Counseling Service, or to apply for services, visit seattlecounseling.org, or call 206.323.1768.



History of NEON

1990's

In 1993, Public Health Seattle King County created NEON to address a growing HIV epidemic among MSM who injected drugs. In 1994, NEON hired its very first outreach worker. Based out of Stonewall Recovery Services, NEON soon expanded to include educational media, and support groups for both harm reduction and abstinence. The wildly popular Amphetamine publication was born. NEON maintained a team of ten dedicated peer educators. In the years that followed, a community-wide effort to address crystal use occurred.

2000's

In 2003, Seattle Counseling Service adopted the NEON program. Services expanded to include one-on-one counseling for crystal meth dependency. In 2008 Neon and Gay City Health Project joined forces to create Speed, Sex, and Sanity, an arts and media project to engage community members in health conversations about men and meth.

2010's

In 2012, NEON peer educators distributed over 111,000 sterile syringes to their contacts. In addition to syringe-exchange, NEON Peer Educators give out risk-reduction supplies, provide referrals for community services, and volunteer their time at high-risk venues.

As we move into our third decade of service, we are more committed than ever to education, harm reduction, and reducing stigma for MSM who use crystal. We are grateful to all of the peer educators past and present. Your work has been invaluable! And of course, a heartfelt thank you to our sister organizations who have provided and continue to provide health services to MSM who use crystal.



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“You are not just a crystal-user. You are an individual who chooses to use crystal. You are a person with values, experiences, feelings, hopes, and dreams. You have a voice. You are loved, and you are important.” - A & M

Meth-amatics

Crystal meth is a synthetic (human-made) stimulant drug. It increases the release of dopamine – your brain’s “feel-good chemical,” and norepinephrine, your brain’s “alert” or “action” chemical.

The flood of these two chemicals causes euphoria (intense pleasure and well-being), increases your energy and sexual performance, and greatly lowers your appetite. You might also feel powerful, confident, and invincible.

The crystal high can last 8 to 12 hours, and repeated use leads some guys to stay up for days, even weeks. Eventually your body “crashes,” and you face a period of exhaustion, irritability, depression, and sometimes paranoia. Your dopamine supply is depleted and your body is in desperate need of rest.

If you’re using, listen to your body, and take care of your health needs. Sleep, rest when needed, exercise, stay hydrated, and eat good-for-you foods.



Abracadabra!

Take me to more Meth 101 info.

Your Method

This brochure talks about common methods of use, with a special focus on injecting. While each method of use has its own set of risks, injecting carries a particularly big risk for HIV transmission. Info for non-injectors, including basic info and safety tips, is talked about starting on page 15.

NEON values **choice** and **self-determination**. If you choose to use crystal, there are ways to lower your risk of HIV, hepatitis, STIs, and other health problems. **YOU are the person who can make safer choices.**

Whatever your method(s), know your limits. Be mindful of how much you can use, and still take care of your needs. Crystal is highly addictive (no pun intended), and a person can quickly become dependent. If you feel like your use is starting to take away from your quality of life, there are options. See the resources section on page 21, for information.

Something in Condom

PROTECTING YOUR CROWN JEWELS ✨

Crystal can lead to marathon sex sessions. As they say, you just might “go all night.” Longer, rougher crystal sex can cause tissue damage to your anus, dick, and throat, making it easier to spread or get HIV and other STIs.

Crystal can also lead you to make decisions like not covering up, having more sex partners, and not communicating about your sexual-safety needs.

Even if you don't party and play, keep supplies in-stock:

- ✦ **Condoms, insertive condoms, & dams** will shield you and your partner(s) from contact with fluids, sores, and sexual bugs.
 - » *Hear ye, hear ye! Oral sex spreads STIs too! Use dams for rimming, and flavored condoms for oral sex. Add some tasty lube to keep it interesting.
- ✦ **Condom-safe lube** is royally important. If you're having anal sex, you'll want to keep your ass lubricated with water-based or silicone-based lube.
 - » Oil-based lubes like Vaseline and lip balm break down condoms, and should not be used—even if you're desperate!!

Keeping supplies on hand shouts “I am prepared, empowered, and care about keeping myself and my partners safe.”

If you feel pressure from a partner NOT to use protection—**you have the right to lay down the law.**



PrEP & PEP

HIV-negative guys who are at high risk for getting HIV can take **PrEP** (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). PrEP involves taking a pill once a day, every day, to help **prevent** getting HIV. Guys who take PrEP should also use condoms, & get tested regularly for HIV and other STIs.

Talk to your medical provider if you are interested in PrEP.

PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) can also lower your risk of getting HIV. PEP is the use of an HIV drug after a possible exposure to HIV. If you feel you might have been exposed to HIV, **go to the Harborview Emergency Room within 24 hours of the exposure. Treatment is more effective when started immediately. PEP will not be administered if you go in after 72 hours.**

Testing

Anyone having oral, anal, or vaginal sex should get tested regularly for HIV, STIs, and hepatitis. Whether you're a king or a jester, sexual bugs don't discriminate. Test every 2 to 3 months, or as recommended by your health care provider.

If you test positive for any STI, connect with your care provider right away for treatment.

Veinity Fair

Veins carry blood that has waste products like carbon dioxide back to your heart, where it enters the lungs to be exchanged for oxygen. Veins have thin, delicate walls, and need to be treated with care.

Arteries carry fresh blood full of oxygen to every corner of your body. Arteries have thick, muscular walls to handle the pressure of the blood pumped from your heart.

*When getting ready to inject, a good rule of thumb to follow is this: arteries have a pulse, veins do not. Don't inject where you feel a pulse!

If you accidentally inject into an artery, you'll know right away because:

- ✦ You might lose a lot of blood.
- ✦ The blood will be bright red and frothy, and may "spurt" out.
- ✦ You might feel an "electrical burn" traveling down that body part.
- ✦ The plunger might get pushed back due to the force of the blood.

If you hit an artery, untie your tourniquet, remove the needle and apply firm pressure to the area. If the bleeding doesn't stop, call 911.

So Fresh and So Clean

Anything hanging out on your skin will go directly into your bloodstream when you inject. Make injection safer by using alcohol pads to scrub dirt, bacteria, and other junk off of your skin.

To clean your site, you'll want to grab two never-been-used alcohol pads. Wash your hands with warm, soapy water. Take the first pad and wipe your site from top to bottom. Take the second pad and wipe the site in a spiral motion, getting bigger as you move out. The spiral motion pushes dirt out and away from the site. Throw away the used alcohol pads so you won't reuse them.

You can get alcohol pads from your local needle exchange, or from your NEON peer educator. If you can't get your hands on a new alcohol pad, scrub your site with warm, soapy water before injecting.

Did You Know?

You can get these supplies for **FREE** from a NEON peer educator: Points, cookers, cottons, sterile water, latex and non-latex tourniquets, condoms, dams, assorted lubes, alcohol wipes, bandages, wound care kits, gauze pads, Fitstick containers, Sharps containers, and more.

Rotate Your Site

Treat your veins with tender loving care. A vein needs time to heal after you stick it with a needle!

Each time you inject, try to use a different site that's at least 1 inch away from the site you used last.



1 INCH

If you don't give them time to heal, your veins could build up scar tissue, get leaky or bruised, or collapse altogether.

To keep from pushing a dangerous blood clot into your blood stream, pick a site that's downstream from the last one used. Downstream means **closer to your heart**.

* A note on femoral injection:

It is **strongly advised** that you don't inject into the femoral vein. Injecting there can cause a dangerous blood clot or infection. Also, the femoral vein is deeper down and lies close to the femoral artery and femoral nerve, and you could easily inject into the wrong "femoral".

Tourniquets

Tourniquets help make veins bulge, which makes them easier to find and secure for injection. Use a soft material for your tourniquet so that it doesn't cut off your circulation, and tie it so that it can be taken off easily. Untie your tourniquet after registering, but before you push the plunger in. This will prevent bruising.

Before tying on a tourniquet, try to make your veins bigger. Do a few push-ups, run around the block, swing your arm around like a propeller, or apply a warm compress to the area.

You'll have an easier time finding a vein if you're well-hydrated. Water, Gatorade, and 100% fruit juice are good choices for liquids.



Use a brand new, sharp needle for each injection. Needles dull after just one use, and a dull needle will damage your delicate veins!

To minimize trauma to your veins, the safest angle to inject is 45 degrees or less. Make sure to inject towards your heart, and pull the syringe out at the same angle you poked it in. If you inject at a bad angle, a few things could happen: you could miss and inject into the tissue (setting you up for an abscess), you could poke straight through the vein, or you could block blood flow in your vein. Your vein could also collapse altogether.

After injecting, cover your site with a bandage and a small piece of gauze if needed, to prevent blood exposure.

You can get new needles at your local needle exchange, or through your peer educator. See the needle exchange link in the resources section on page 21.

Don't get abscessed with injecting

An abscess is a hard, red, painful lump filled with pus. When you inject something into your tissue that your body doesn't like, white blood cells zoom in to **fight the infection**. If there is nowhere for the white blood cells to move, they harden and form an abscess.

You might get an abscess if you:

- 1) Inject a substance with a lot of big or loose particles
- 2) Inject into dirty skin
- 3) Miss your vein and inject into the tissue around the vein
- 4) Skin-pop your hit
- 5) Reuse needles or use dirty works

To prevent an abscess:

- 1) Wash your hands with soap and water, then clean your site with two alcohol pads.
- 2) Use a brand new needle and clean works every time you inject.
- 3) Use a new cotton to filter each hit (bacteria love to grow in used cottons!).
- 4) Take your time when injecting, so you know you're in a vein.
- 5) Don't skin-pop.
- 6) "Know your dealer." Stick with a source you think is trustworthy, so you know what you're getting.

If you think you might be getting an abscess, it's best to get medical attention. If you can't or aren't willing to get medical attention, there are a couple ways you can help the abscess come to a head:

1) Apply warm compresses:

Wring out a clean washcloth in warm water and hold it on the problem area to help the pus come to a head. Do this for 10 to 15 minutes, several times a day.

2) Soak in warm water:

Warm water baths will help the abscess come to a head. You can use plain warm water, or add-in 2 cups of Epsom salts. Try to soak several times per day.

Once the abscess comes to a head, (it will look white and raised) the pus needs to get drained by a medical provider. Trying to drain it yourself puts you at risk for a more serious infection! Once the abscess is drained, your provider might give you a prescription for antibiotics. Follow the instructions for taking the antibiotics so that you don't develop antibiotic resistance.

There are a couple of clinics in the Seattle-area that specialize in abscess care. See the resources page for clinics.

** Remember: an abscess is an infection that can become life-threatening if not treated properly. You owe it to yourself and to your health to get medical care for an abscess.*

Leave the Mixing for the DJ



Anything you use to inject gets contaminated with germs. Mixing up points and works puts you and your shooting buddies at risk for spreading HIV and hepatitis. Try your very best to use only your own points and works.

- ⚡ If you're using with friends, mark your own syringes beforehand with a permanent marker.
- ⚡ Right after use, dispose of your used syringe in a Sharps container
 - OR, put your used syringe in a Fitstick Container (a molded piece of plastic that locks over a needle). The syringe then becomes impossible to reuse.
- ⚡ Keep your own bag of works, & don't share
 - After use, put your works back in your personal bag. Don't leave them lying around for someone else to use.
- ⚡ Recapping needles can lead you to reuse by mistake. If you must recap a needle, put tape around the lid so you know it's been used.

One Toke Over the Line

If you think someone is overdosing, **call 911 ASAP!** Some guys worry about calling for medical help, because they fear getting in trouble for their own use. Washington State's *911 Good Samaritan Law* protects you from criminal charges of drug possession when you seek medical help for an overdose – for yourself or for another person.

According to Washington State's *911 Good Samaritan Law*, "A person acting in good faith who seeks medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug-related overdose shall not be charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance...or penalized...if the evidence for the charge of possession of a controlled substance was obtained as a result of the person seeking medical assistance."

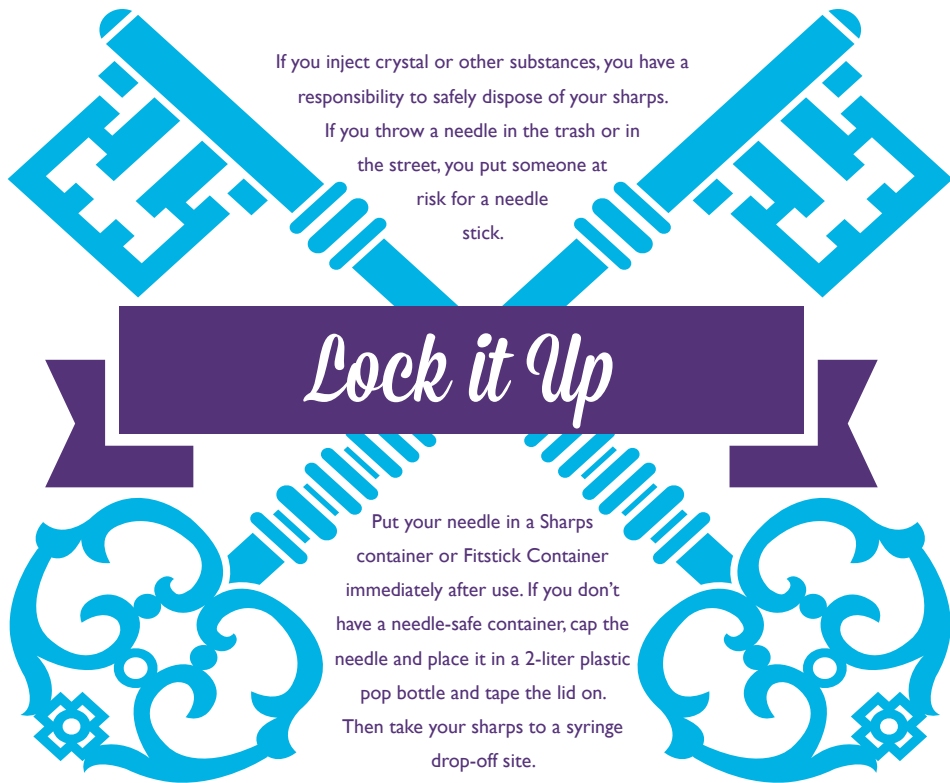
In addition, "A person who experiences a drug-related overdose and is in need of medical assistance shall not be charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance...if the evidence for the charge of possession of a controlled substance was obtained as a result of the overdose and the need for medical assistance."

Read more about Washington State's 911 Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Law
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=69.50.315>

Print out a Washington State 911 Good Samaritan Law wallet-card for yourself:
<http://stopoverdose.org/docs/911%20Good%20Samaritan%20Wallet%20Card.pdf>

Not a Washingtonian? Read about the Good Samaritan Law for your state:
http://www.heartsafeam.com/pages/faq_good_samaritan

IF A FRIEND IS OVERDOSING, CALL 911!



If you inject crystal or other substances, you have a responsibility to safely dispose of your sharps.

If you throw a needle in the trash or in the street, you put someone at risk for a needle stick.

Lock it Up

Put your needle in a Sharps container or Fitstick Container immediately after use. If you don't have a needle-safe container, cap the needle and place it in a 2-liter plastic pop bottle and tape the lid on.

Then take your sharps to a syringe drop-off site.

To find a syringe drop-off site in King County, visit:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/hiv/resources/disposal.aspx>

You can get a free personal Sharps container from your NEON peer educator, or they are available for purchase at most pharmacies.

Methods

Booty-Bumping:

(Also called "keistering") A needle-less syringe is used to insert a hit into the anus. Crystal is then absorbed through the digestive tract.

Hot-Railing:

Crystal is cut into lines on a flat surface. A glass straw or stem is heated up on one end to a high heat. The hot end of the straw is dragged along the line of crystal, turning it into smoke, which is inhaled.

Smoking:

Crystal is put into a pipe. Using a lighter, the pipe is heated to produce vapors that are inhaled into the lungs.

Snorting:

Crystal is crushed up and chopped into lines. The lines are then snorted with a straw or rolled up piece of paper.

Booty-Bumping

Each time you booty-bump, use a brand-new syringe with the needle taken out. The safest type to use is a syringe with a screw-off needle (do not snap a needle off of a syringe as this could create dangerous sharp edges). After you screw off the needle, feel the tip of the syringe with a clean finger, to ensure that there are no sharp edges. Remember: you are a pretty princess with a delicate, paper-thin asshole!!

If you try to booty-bump with the needle in the syringe, rest assured you won't make the same mistake twice!

Basic Safety:

Wash your hands with soap and water, and prepare your hit using sterile water and brand-new works.

Don't use alone: have someone with you so you can take care of each other if something goes wrong.

Discard your syringe and the screw-off needle in a Sharps container after use, so that you won't reuse them.

Sexual Safety:

Booty-bumping can cause micro tears in your hole. Use a condom and lube if you have anal sex after booty-bumping.

If you rim your partner after they booty-bump (or vice versa), use a dam.

Hot-Railing

Basic Safety:

Carefully clean your work surface and straw, before and after each use. This will lower your chance of getting an infection like Hepatitis C, which can survive for several days on a surface.

Use your own straw and say "no" to sharing.

Don't use alone: have someone with you so you can take care of each other if something goes wrong.

Smoking

Basic Safety:

Hold the pipe evenly between your lips. Just be careful not to burn them.

- *Don't hold the pipe with your teeth. You don't want to risk accidentally biting into a glass pipe!

Smoking will get you high fast. Space out your hits so that you don't do too much at a time.

Pipes can spread germs like herpes and hepatitis. Use your own pipe, and clean the pipe when you're done.

Don't use alone: have someone with you so you can take care of each other if something goes wrong.

Drink lots of water. Crystal causes dehydration, which reduces the amount of saliva in your mouth. You need saliva to keep your teeth and gums healthy, and to prevent "meth mouth."

Snorting

Basic Safety:

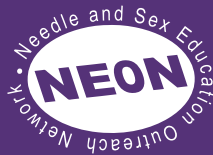
Carefully clean the surface you plan to snort from, to get rid of particles, bacteria, and germs.

Crush up your crystal into a fine powder, so that you don't snort any big particles (which could cause more damage to the tissue in your nostrils).

Don't snort everyday. The lining of your nose is delicate, and you can damage it if you don't give your nose a rest.

Don't use rolled-up money for snorting. Money passes through the hands of a lot of people, and is full of bacteria and germs.

Don't use alone: have someone with you so you can take care of each other if something goes wrong.



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