

# Safer Tablet Injection

A resource for anyone who is injecting tablet medications (pills) and would like to do so more safely

[Click here for the video resources](#)

Tablets medications (pills) from a pharmacy are less likely to cause an overdose compared to drugs or pills from the illicit market - this is because the dose and contents of prescribed drugs are known.

Tablet medications contain fillers (e.g. coatings and powders) that can cause harm when injected, such as serious infections, abscesses and damage to the veins, skin, heart, and lungs. These risks can be reduced by using harm reduction supplies, including filters.

## Filters can be used to remove some of the fillers to make injecting pills safer – but injecting pills is never completely safe

- Harm Reduction filters, like 'Sterifilt', cotton, or wheel filters
  - 'Sterifilt' filters ('FAST' and 'BASIC') have very small holes – these remove most fillers; 'Sterifilt BASIC' is most effective when used with cotton filter
  - Cotton filters (like the one in the cooker) remove big particles, but not small ones
- Makeshift filters, like cigarette filters, Q-tips or cotton balls:
  - Remove fewer fillers than harm reduction filters
  - Are not sterile and may have bacteria or viruses on them which can cause infections (e.g. 'cotton fever')
  - Cigarette filters may have small glass particles or other substances from smoking and cause vein damage

## For each injection, recommended harm reduction equipment (new and/or sterile), include:

- Alcohol swab
- 1 cc or 0.5cc syringe with or without needle
- Sterile water
- Cooker
- Gauze and bandages
- Tie (tourniquet)
- Filters
- Pill crusher or something clean to crush your pills with (e.g. spoons, paper, plunger end of rig)

## How to prepare drugs for injection

- Wash hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer/alcohol swabs) to reduce the risk of infection
- Clean surfaces and any non-sterile equipment (soap and water or accelerated H2O2 cleaner), wait for it to dry completely before use. If unable to clean, use fresh newspaper or magazine
- Crush tablets to a fine powder. For capsules with beads, open capsule to remove beads, crush them inside a flap of clean paper with a blunt object (e.g. lighter)
- Prepare your dose in the cooker using the 'cold' or 'hot' method

### COLD METHOD (RECOMMENDED)

In a sterile cooker dissolve the dose in sterile water (may take 30 seconds to a few minutes).

- + This method may be safest - it will not melt coatings/beads which can cause harm if injected
- + Lab tests show that the medication (drug) will dissolve in the water, even if parts of pill (fillers) aren't dissolved
- This method does not kill bacteria or viruses

### HOT METHOD

In a sterile cooker, dissolve the dose in sterile water and heat.

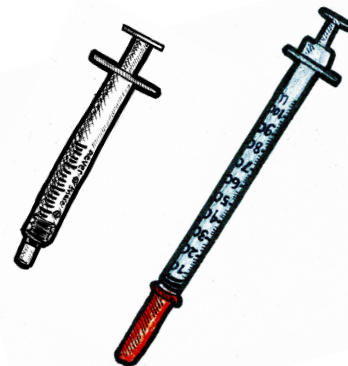
- +This can kill some bacteria and viruses
- Will melt some fillers (e.g. coatings/beads) that can get through your filter and can cause harm if injected

**Note:** You may choose to heat your preparation if you feel there may be viruses or bacteria in your mix

# How to Filter for Injection

## General Info

- You can use syringes with needles attached, or needleless syringes with separate needle tips
- Keep supplies clean: avoid touching filters, or putting equipment on unclean surfaces
- Harm reduction filters remove fillers, not medication - they don't steal your drugs. You may need to rinse cotton filters once or twice to get all of the medication out
- If the mix is cloudy, there are fillers in the mix - consider filtering again
- Try to have patience while filtering with 'Sterifilt' FAST and BASIC filters. You will get the best results when you take your time
- If the filter is not working, in a twisting motion push the filter onto the syringe
- When opening the cooker, try to keep the cotton filter in the sterile package

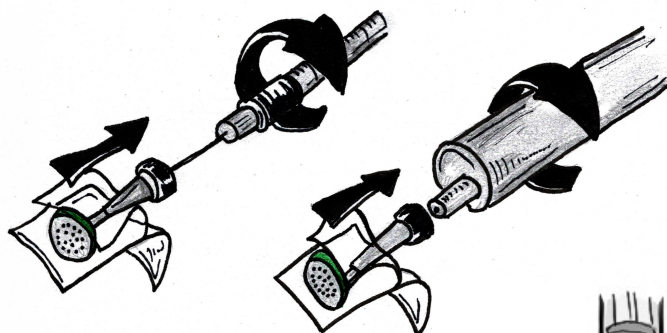
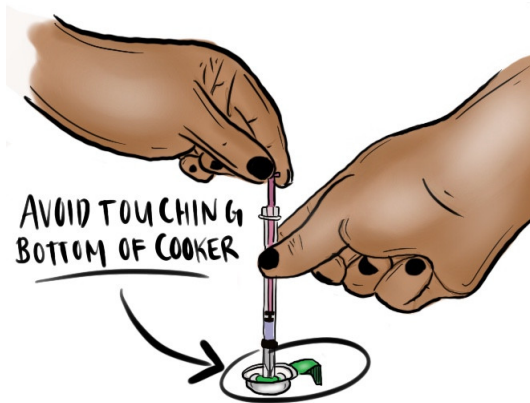
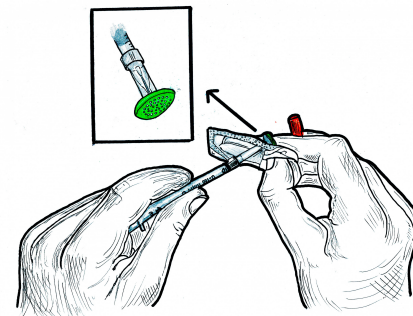


## Option 1: Sterifilt FAST (15mm filter)

*This filter removes the most fillers and is less likely to clog than using Sterifilt BASIC*

### Attach Sterifilt FAST to syringe

- **Open package halfway** so the filter stays in the package, **press thumb into filter to allow attachment** to syringe
- In a straight line connect syringe and filter; gently but firmly **push then twist until tight** to make an airtight seal (you will hear a click)
- If you use a syringe with needle, ensure the needle goes straight in, to avoid bending it through the side of the filter
- If you use a needleless syringe, the filter goes where the needle attaches to - attach the needle after you filter the medication into the syringe



### Filter drugs (can take 20-60 seconds)

- Place Sterifilt upright into the cooker, avoid touching filter to bottom of cooker
- Pull on syringe plunger very **slowly to prevent air bubbles**. Allow for delay of the mix entering the syringe while holding plunger
- Turn syringe, tap and remove any air bubbles
- Either recap needle, or leave filter in place until injection
- Prepare for injection

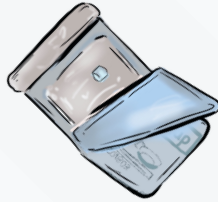




# How to Filter for Injection

## Option 2: Cotton Filter (comes with cooker)

When opening cooker, keep cotton filter in the clean packaging while you prepare your dose



After dissolving/cooking, drop the cotton from the package into the cooker (without touching it with your fingers). Wet the cotton with a few drops of sterile water

Gently insert needle tip into cotton filter - don't push the needle all the way through or the filter won't work

Pull on plunger to fill syringe

Turn syringe, tap and remove any air bubbles

Leave filter in place and prepare for injection



**ALWAYS SAFELY DISPOSE OF NEEDLES , COOKERS AND FILTERS IN SHARPS CONTAINER**

To find a harm reduction site or overdose prevention site, please visit [www.towardtheheart.com/site-finder](http://www.towardtheheart.com/site-finder)  
For more information on safer injection practice, please visit: <https://towardtheheart.com/resource/safer-injection/open>  
For videos on how to use filters, please visit: <http://ow.ly/9PUA50CoBw0>