

# What are Blood Clots and Embolisms?

A blood clot can form in your veins when bacteria gets into your body from an injection or part of an infection breaks off into your blood stream. If a blood clot gets loose, this is called an embolism. An embolism can travel to different parts of your body and can be very dangerous.

## Blood Clots & Embolisms

- ✓ **If you have a blood clot in your arm or leg**, you may feel pain and have redness and swelling in the area.
- ✓ **If you have a blood clot in your lungs**, it can cause chest pain, shortness of breath, or you could lose consciousness.
- ✓ **If you have a blood clot in your brain**, it can cause a stroke. You may have numbness or weakness, fainting, blurred vision, issues speaking, or may lose consciousness.
- ✓ **Blood clots and embolisms are dangerous.** They can get stuck in the vein and block the flow of blood and oxygen to important organs, like your heart and brain. If you think you have a blood clot, try and get to a hospital right away!

### Renfrew County has a SCATR Machine!

A SCATR machine is a drug checking machine that can quickly identify dangerous ingredients in drugs. Ask the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team about SCATR events you can attend and get your drugs tested!



# Who Should I Call?

## Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre

If you have a health concern and are not comfortable calling 911, call RCVTAC for support from medical receptionist, family doctors, and community paramedics 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



RCVTAC  
1-877-727-6404

## Mackay Manor

To get in touch with the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team, call Mackay Manor and they can get you connected!



Mackay Manor  
1-877-819-4181

**mesa** | [www.mackaymanor.ca/mesa-mobile-outreach-program/](http://www.mackaymanor.ca/mesa-mobile-outreach-program/)

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**mesa**  
Renfrew County Mobile  
Substance Use Service

# Staying Safe While Using Substances

Your quick guide on staying safe and knowing about potential harms



# The Toxic Drug Supply

The current drug supply is toxic and unpredictable. You may not always know what is in the substances you use. This brochure outlines how to recognize harms and take steps to stay safer and healthier.

## Potential Harms

### Bacterial Infections



### Viral Infections



### Blood Clots & Embolisms



## Bacterial Infections

- ✓ **Infections can happen** when bacteria enters the body through breaks in the skin, like injections sites.
- ✓ **Reduce your risk** of infection by cleaning your hands and injection site before injecting, using new supplies for each injections, using filters to prepare drugs, covering the site with a dry swab after injecting, and injecting different substances separately.
- ✓ **If you experience symptoms** of an infection (redness, warmth, pain), check in with your healthcare provider or the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team!



**Combining substances can be dangerous, proceed with caution if you do!**

## Viral Infections

- ✓ **Hepatitis B** is a virus that infects your liver. It can be passed through sex or sharing equipment used for injection, smoking, or snorting. There are vaccines to prevent Hepatitis B, but there is no cure. Treatment can manage chronic Hep B infections.
- ✓ **Hepatitis C** is another virus that infects your liver. Most infections are passed through sharing injection, smoking or snorting equipment. A blood test can confirm if you've had an infection, and there is a treatment that cures 95% of infections.
- ✓ **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)** weakens your immune system. It can be passed through sex and sharing injection equipment. There is no vaccine to prevent HIV, but there are a lot of prevention strategies to greatly reduce your chance of passing it! Knowing your HIV status is important for your health.

## Screening is important for your health!



Taking part in regular screening for viruses like Hep B, Hep C, or HIV, as well as other blood-borne infections is really important to maintain your health! It will help you get connected to treatment more quickly. Ask the **Mesa Mobile Outreach Team** about regular screening!

# Tips for Safer Use



## Don't share equipment

Use new equipment every time you use. Ask the Outreach Team for new supplies!



## Keep naloxone with you

Know how to use naloxone, call 911 and give breaths - it can save a life.



## Avoid using alone

Tell someone before you use and make a plan, or use a virtual service, if you can. Ask the Outreach Team about virtual options!



## Stagger use with others

Stagger your use, if you can, so someone is able to respond if an overdose happens.



## Clean hands, clean setup

Wash your hands and prep surfaces with soap and water or an alcohol swab before smoking.



## Start low and go slow

Always begin with a small amount to see how strong the substance is.



## Be aware of toxic ingredients

Your drugs can include toxic substances. If you can, get your drugs checked and talk to the Outreach Team about the local drug supply.