

Finding veins

You have more veins than you think! **If you can't see a vein, feel for one.** A tie makes this easier.

Press gently on your arm with the ends of your fingers. Veins feel different:

- Veins — a bouncy tube or under-cooked pasta
- Muscle — flat steak
- Tendons — stretched bungee cord



Stay away from valves

You have valves all along each vein. And where 2 veins meet. **Valves look like small bumps.** When you press on it, the bump goes away then pops back.

In deeper veins, valves are hard to feel. But watch as you register. **If the plunger gets stuck pulling back or won't move, or the blood stops, you hit a valve.**

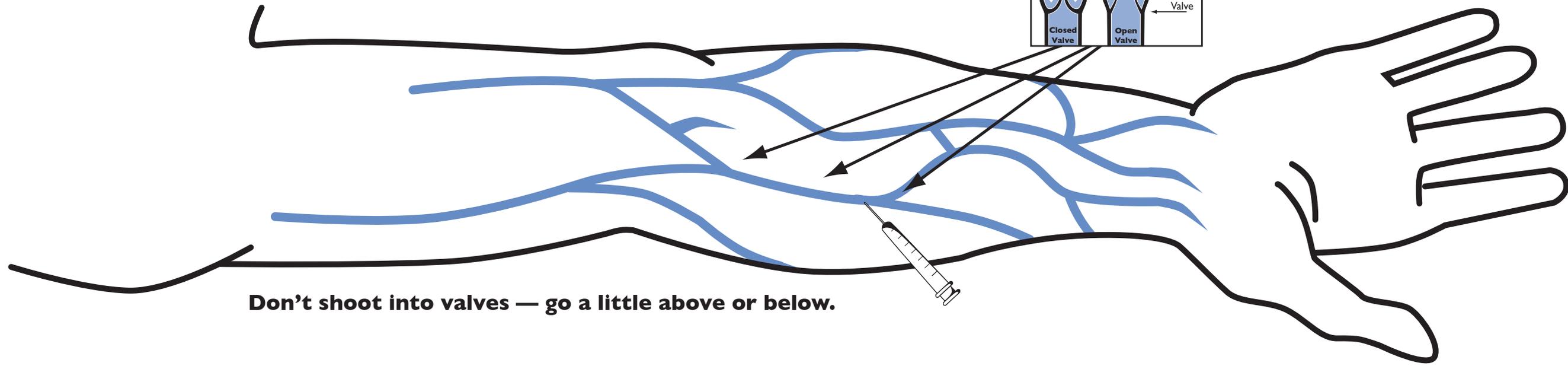
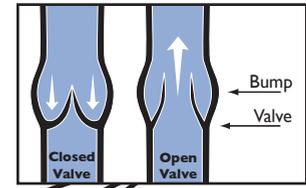
Don't use this spot again.

Using new spots

If you're not in a hurry, take the time to find a different vein. Maybe even practice using your other hand to shoot. Save your easy spots for when you **know** you won't have time.



Our bad tar needs more water! The tar will cause less damage if it moves faster through your veins. A thicker hit will not get you higher.



Don't shoot into valves — go a little above or below.

Thinking about quitting?

Needle exchange staff can talk with you about detox, methadone, buprenorphine, and drug treatment.

You do have options!



Alternative formats available
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Your arms are NOT hopeless!

It's true!!



Keepin' the veins you got

Your veins are not doomed.

You really CAN keep them a long time.

And never think about going to your neck or crotch!



Just because we shoot drugs doesn't mean we can't take care of ourselves. And gosh darn it — we're worth it!

Veins blow because

- ◆ **They get infected** with bacteria from your skin. Veins get red, sore, and weak.
- ◆ **They get poked too much.** Each poke leaves a tiny hole. Used points cause even bigger holes and tears. Over time, scars at these holes clog the vein.
- ◆ **You hit a vein valve.** Valves control blood flow through your veins section by section. If a valve goes down, so does that part of your vein.

Once veins collapse, they're gone for good.



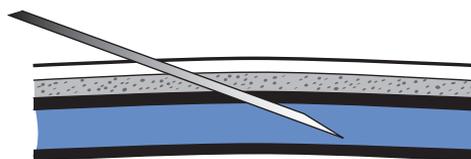
- ◆ **Get rid of dirt**
- ◆ **Poke less**
- ◆ **Use a new point for each shot**
- ◆ **Stay away from valves**

The best defense = shooting right

- ◆ **Wash your hands and injection site** with soap. Wipe with alcohol pads and let dry.
- ◆ **Use a fresh needle** for each shot.
- ◆ **Tie off**, even if you have big, honkin' veins already!

Go **snug** but not so **tight** it hurts or cuts off your blood flow. Release the tie right before you shoot.

- ◆ **Rotate sites.** Let each spot heal before you use it again.
- ◆ **Angle your needle** low, bevel-up and facing your heart.



- ◆ **SLOW DOWN!!** No matter how sick you are or how bad you want to get off. **A rush job just blows your veins and your shot.**

Smaller veins need slower hits.

Tips for chicks

Hey girls! Sometimes our veins are harder to see, right?



- ◆ Our bodies are colder than men's. So our skin needs to **get warmer.** A bath, shower or hot towel can help veins pop-up better.
- ◆ **Build up arm muscle.** Stronger muscles push veins up!
- ◆ Learn how to **feel for veins** if you can't see them (see other side).
- ◆ Girl veins are smaller, so you have to **hit s-l-o-w-e-r.** Don't let guys rush you.
- ◆ Keep your **eye on the needle.** Don't watch the dope. Your syringe will keep steady and you won't push through the vein.
- ◆ Stop relying on someone else to hit you. **You CAN learn how to do it on your own.** It's your body. You're in charge of it, not him!

Needle exchange staff have lots of helpful tips. Pull up your sleeves and don't be shy!

No question is stupid. You can also get personal advice from

Jason-That Vein Care Guy

at needle exchange. Brush up your shooting skills with a real vein expert!



You can see

Jason - That Vein Care Guy

for personal vein advice every:

Wednesday afternoon @ Downtown Exchange

Friday night @ Capitol Hill Exchange