

UNDERSTANDING PEPTIDE USE

Injectable peptides are synthetic compounds increasingly marketed online for appearance, performance, recovery, and healthy ageing. Many products are sourced through unregulated markets, have limited human evidence, and may not be recognised by people who use them as a form of drug use. As a result, peptide use may go undisclosed unless explored during service interactions.



HEALTH CONVERSATIONS

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

Use non-judgemental language

"What have you heard about peptides?"
"What are you hoping they will help you achieve?"
"What else are you using alongside them?"

AVOID STIGMA

Many people obtain information through social media, online forums, and peers. Open conversations improve disclosure and engagement. This allows you to provide sterile equipment and harm reduction advice.

RISKS

PRODUCT LEGITIMACY

Many peptides are purchased through unregulated online markets where contents and dosing may be uncertain. Purity and sterility may be unknown. Potential risks include: contamination, mislabelling, dosage variability.

HEALTH RISKS

Potential harms may include injection-related complications (e.g., infection and abscesses), gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., nausea, vomiting, and abdominal discomfort), endocrine effects, and unknown long-term health consequences.

EVIDENCE

HUMAN RESEARCH

Most peptides have limited human evidence

Many products promoted online have not been adequately evaluated in clinical trials and lack long-term safety data. Acknowledge what is known and unknown without alarmism. Focus on evidence rather than social media claims. Here are two articles to assist you.



SERVICE PRINCIPLES

Be Curious

Many people who use peptides may not disclose use unless asked.

Be Non-judgemental

Focus on understanding motivations, goals, and concerns.

Acknowledge Uncertainty

Many peptides have limited human evidence and unknown long-term effects.

Focus on Harm Reduction

Support safer decision-making, regardless of whether a person continues, reduces, or stops use.

Recognise Broader Drivers

Peptide use is often linked to body image, performance, recovery, or healthy ageing goals.

Provide Practical Support

Refer people using peptides to Steroid QNECT for safer injecting guidance, subcutaneous injection techniques, reconstitution support, and harm reduction information.

SERVICE RESPONSE

Presentation to service	What to explore	Key Messages	Harm reduction response
Person seeking information about peptides	Reasons for interest (fat loss, muscle gain, recovery, anti-ageing, optimisation), information sources, expectations of use	Many peptide products are unregulated, have uncertain contents, and limited human evidence	Provide balanced information, discuss uncertainty, encourage evidence-based approaches to health and performance
Person currently using peptides	Product type, source, route of administration, frequency of use, stacking with other substances	Product legitimacy, contamination, dosing variability, unknown long-term effects, and injection-related harms	Provide safer injecting information, discuss symptom monitoring, encourage healthcare engagement where appropriate
Person reporting adverse effects	Symptoms experienced, timing of onset, products used, other substances used concurrently	Adverse effects can be difficult to predict due to uncertain product contents and limited human research	Encourage medical assessment where indicated, provide support and follow-up, document emerging concerns where appropriate
Person wanting to reduce or stop use	Motivations for stopping, concerns, barriers, support needs	Validate concerns, avoid judgement, reinforce benefits of reducing exposure to uncertain products	Support cessation planning, ongoing monitoring, referral pathways, and follow-up