

SAFE HANDLING OF SHARPS

What are sharps? The term “sharps” means any object or device with sharp points, protuberances, or a cutting edge that is capable of piercing the skin. Examples are: needles/syringes and lancets.

Why is injury from a sharp a concern? If you are accidentally punctured by a used sharp, such as a needle/syringe or lancet there is concern about exposure to blood borne pathogens. The main concerns are Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV.

How do you prevent injury from sharps? Always use caution and be aware of everything you are doing when handling a sharp. Make sure you are away from other people and are not trying to multi-task. Adhere to the Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps Procedures.

Where are sharps disposed of? Sharps are thrown away into a designated sharps container, specifically intended for this purpose. This container is rigid-walled, puncture-proof, and sealable. When this container is full, the container is then brought to a designated area where a contracted company will pick it up. Sharps are not to be placed in the regular waste bin.

What to do if a needle stick injury occurs?

- Stay calm
- Encourage the wound to bleed (gently squeeze)
- As soon as possible wash the area with running water and soap (if available).
- Notify your supervisor and complete an exposure to blood borne pathogens incident report
- Visit a health care provider and they will manage blood testing, counseling, and any necessary vaccinations.

See next page for guidelines

Guidelines for Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

Procedure	Precautions
<p>Step 1 –Prior to handling sharps put on disposable medical gloves.</p> <p><i>* Note: gloves will not prevent the wearer from being injured but will form a clean barrier between hands and the syringe.</i></p>	<p><u>Do not</u> attempt to recap the needle. <u>Do not</u> attempt to break, bend, or otherwise manipulate the sharp.</p>
<p>Step 2 – Bring your sharps disposal container to the sharp.</p>	<p><u>Do not</u> attempt to walk with the sharp.</p>
<p>Step 3 – Place the container on the ground or on a flat surface.</p>	<p><u>Do not</u> hold the sharps container or ask another person to hold it as you are disposing of the sharp.</p>
<p>Step 4 – Pick-up the sharp by the middle of the barrel or middle of the object.</p>	<p>The safest method for picking up a sharp is by hand. <u>Do not</u> use a dust pan and brush to sweep up the sharp as the sweeping movement can cause the sharp to flick into the air and cause further risk. <u>Do not</u> use tweezers to pick-up a sharp as they can cause the sharp to flick.</p>
<p>Step 5 – Place the sharp in the container sharp end first.</p>	<p>Keep the sharp end facing away from you at all times.</p>
<p>Step 6 – Securely place the lid on the container and ensure it is sealed.</p>	<p><u>Do not</u> overfill the sharps container. When it is full take the full container to a designated disposal area and place the sealed container into the disposal bin for pick-up.</p>
<p>Step 7 – Remove gloves following the proper gloving procedures and wash hands following the proper hand washing procedures</p>	<p>Properly dispose of gloves.</p>