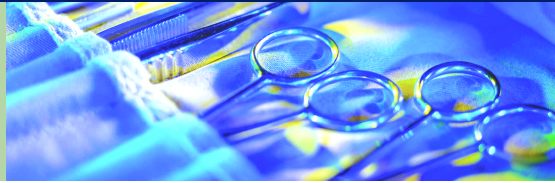


SHARPS INJURY PREVENTION

PROTECTION: Your Choice, Your Responsibility



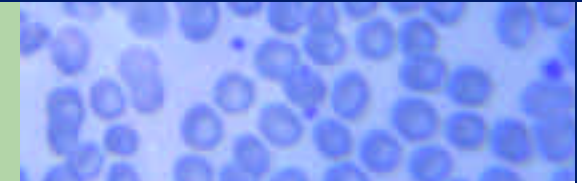
SHARPS INCLUDE:

- Needles (hypodermic, blood collection, suture, intravenous)
- Razor blades
- Scalpel blades
- Lancets



HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

- Never re-cap needles.
- Use sharps with safety features.
- Immediately discard used sharps in a puncture-resistant sharps disposal container.
- Keep disposal containers close to the source of the contaminated sharps and seal and replace containers when they are three-quarters full.
- Laundry and maintenance personnel should not carry garbage or linen bags close to their body.
- Participate in training on safe handling of sharps or ask your employer for more information.
- If you find a sharps hazard, take steps to eliminate it.
- Inform your supervisor of all sharps hazards you observe or know about.
- Get a hepatitis B vaccination.



DID YOU KNOW?

- A number of pathogens that are found in blood products and bodily fluids can cause serious or fatal infections.
- These organisms can be introduced into the bloodstream of a healthy individual through the skin via a contaminated sharp.
- The pathogens that pose the most serious health risks are:
 - > Hepatitis B (HBV)
 - > Hepatitis C (HCV)
 - > Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which causes AIDS.
- You may not become sick immediately after an injury. You can be infected for months or years without knowing it.
- If you contract Hepatitis C, you will likely become a carrier with a high risk of developing cirrhosis and/or cancer of the liver.



WHO IS AT RISK?

- Health care workers
- Nursing staff
- Doctors
- Dentists/Hygienists
- Personal Support Workers/Health Care Aides (front line staff)
- Central supply staff
- Community care staff
- Laundry staff
- Maintenance staff
- Food service staff
- Housekeeping/Environmental Services staff
- Lab technicians
- Anyone else who can come into contact with a contaminated sharp



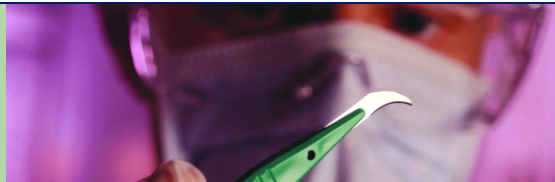
YOUR EMPLOYERS CAN HELP BY:

- Seeking out and research new procedures and equipment that can reduce risk of exposure
- Working with your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or your health and safety representative to assist in developing, implementing and evaluating a plan to reduce sharps injuries in your facility
- Keeping a record of incidents involving sharps injuries to identify trends
- Auditing workers for safe work procedures when using sharps and holding them accountable if standards are not adhered to



IF YOU ARE INJURED BY A SHARP:

- Assume all used sharps are contaminated.
- Immediately flush the area to clean it, then apply a skin disinfectant.
- Report your injury to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Speak with a suitably qualified professional about any questions or concerns you may have.
- If there is a risk of acquiring Hepatitis B, get a Hepatitis B Immune Globulin injection within 48 hours if you have not already received the vaccine.
- For exposure to blood contaminated with HIV or from a person at high risk for having HIV, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) drugs should be started within a few hours of the injury.
- Follow your facility's policies and procedures dealing with sharps injury.



YES, IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!

- It is estimated that 5 people per year in Canada will contract AIDS through their work.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US estimates health care workers sustain nearly 600,000 injuries per year involving contaminated sharps.

For additional information and links related to sharps injuries visit www.hchsa.on.ca



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