SHARPS SAFETY
for
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT AN INJURY

Be Prepared

• Organize your work area with appropriate sharps disposal containers within reach
• Work in well-lit areas
• Receive training on how to use sharps safety devices
• Before handling sharps, assess any hazards—get help if needed

Be Aware

• Keep the exposed sharp in view
• Be aware of people around you
• Stop if you feel rushed or distracted
• Focus on your task
• Avoid hand-passing sharps and use verbal alerts when moving sharps
• Watch for sharps in linen, beds, on the floor, or in waste containers

Dispose of Sharps with Care

• Be responsible for the device you use
• Activate safety features after use
• Dispose of devices in rigid sharps containers; do not overfill containers
• Keep fingers away from the opening of sharps containers

A FACILITY’S “CULTURE OF SAFETY” IS IMPORTANT FOR SHARPS INJURY PREVENTION

FACILITIES THAT VALUE SAFETY HAVE FEWER SHARPS INJURIES.

Characteristics of such facilities include:

• Sharps injury prevention is a prominent organizational priority
• Management and staff have a shared commitment to prevent sharps injuries
• Staff members are encouraged to report sharps injuries promptly
• Individual safety accountability is promoted

For more information:
www.cdc.gov/sharpssafety
Every day, more than 1,000 healthcare workers in the hospital setting are injured with a needle or other sharp device.

**MOST HEALTHCARE WORKERS ARE AT RISK.**

What are your chances of infection from a contaminated sharps injury?

**Hepatitis B:** 1 in 5 (if you’re not vaccinated)

**Hepatitis C:** 1 in 50

**HIV:** 1 in 300

After getting first aid, report sharps injuries. Report other sharp hazards you observe. You may help prevent someone else from being injured.

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**Types of sharps safety devices that can be used to protect workers:**

- Needle-free IV systems
- Sheathed, blunting, or retractable needles
- Blood transfer adapters
- Non-breakable plastic vacuum and capillary tubes
- Sharps disposal containers

**GETInvOLVED IN SELECTING AND EVALUATING THE DEVICES YOU USE.**

Employers are required to involve frontline workers in selecting devices with safety features.

**Choose devices that:**

- Come attached with safety features that can not be removed
- Are easy to use with clear instructions
- Do not interfere with patient care
- Can be engaged with one hand
- Enable hands to remain behind the exposed sharp
- Are visibly different when activated

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**Examples of High-risk situations:**

**During patient care:**

- Inserting or withdrawing a needle
- Inserting needles into IV lines
- Handling or passing sharps

**Immediately after sharp use:**

- Recapping a used needle
- Transferring or processing specimens

**During and after sharp disposal:**

- Disposing of sharps into proper containers
- Cleaning up after a procedure
- Sharps left on floors and tables, or found in linen, beds, or waste containers

In hospitals, 80% (4 in 5) of sharps injuries are due to the use of:

- Hypodermic needles/syringes
- Suture needles
- Winged-steel (butterfly-type) needles
- Blood collection needles
- Scalpels
- IV styles

Many other devices, including glass, also cause sharps injuries.