

Center for MR Research – 3T

Policy 3: Guidelines for Handling Sharps

It is the policy of the Center for MR Research to provide guidelines for the handling of sharps, reusable sharps, and the safe and proper disposal of contaminated and other sharp material. This is consistent with the UIC Policy.

DEFINITION

Sharps are generally disposable items, which are used to puncture or cut through the skin for medical/surgical procedures. All sharp items when handled improperly may cause not only a laceration but also infection.

PROCEDURE

A. Disposable sharp items include but are not limited to:

1. Disposable plastic syringes with needles.
2. Disposable glass syringes with needles.
3. IV administration sets (Angiocath, butterfly needles, etc.)
4. Blood collecting needles.
5. Lancets or suture needles.
6. Disposable cutting blade (razors/scalpels)
7. Glass ampoules, broken glass
8. Disposable metal pharmaceutical seals, i.e. as on IV bottles
9. Glass Pipettes

B. Storage of Sharps

1. Unused syringes and needles are kept in a locked location in order to prevent unauthorized use.
2. Only authorized staff should have access

C. Handling of Sharps

1. Wash your hands prior to handling sharps. This decreases the chances of infection. Wear gloves to protect you from surface contamination, when appropriate.
2. Do NOT touch the sharpened edge/point.
3. Keep the protective covering in place (while transporting the sharps) until the sharp item is needed.
4. Never carry sharps in a pocket.
5. Discard all the disposable sharps according to instructions below.
6. Remove all full contaminated sharps boxes as outlined below.

D. Guidelines for disposing of disposable sharps

1. To discard disposable needles/syringes or any other potential sharps that have been used in normal situations or isolation cases.

- a. After injection do not recap the needle.
 - b. Take the used sharp to the nearest sharp disposal box.
 - c. Place entire needle and syringe in container.
 - d. Take care not to overfill the box.
 - e. Never place used sharps in the regular trash.
- E. Needle boxes or Sharps containers.
1. Close opening and secure.
 2. Contact housekeeping for pick-up of the full box. The full box should be picked up by housekeeping services.
 3. Place the new empty box in service immediately.
- F. Guidelines to follow when a cut or puncture wound occurs when handling sharps:
1. Press a few drops of blood to minimize contamination.
 2. Wash site for 10 minutes with antibacterial soap and running water.
 3. Apply cold water to area to stop bleeding.
 4. Try to determine if the item involved was clean or contaminated. IF the case is unknown, consider it contaminated. Try to determine if used on a particular patient. If used on an outpatient, request that the patient wait for potential blood work.
 5. Immediately inform the supervisor and secure a medical evaluation per HMPP HR 1.01 (At all times to Emergency Services Department (ESD) for severe injuries and for serious work related injuries. During normal business hours to University Health Services (UHS). During non-business hours and on weekends and holidays ESD. An employee initially seen in ESD must report to UHS on the next business day.)

SEE ALSO UIMC Hospital Policy IC 4.02 for Management of Employee Post Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids.

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