



Safer Sharps Handling

Accidental exposure to contaminated needles can expose health care workers to blood borne pathogens (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV) and other infections. The following information will help protect you by providing guidance on how to safely handle sharps.



WHAT ARE SHARPS?

- Needles, with or without syringes (including insulin pens)
- Lancets
- Scalpel blades
- Broken medication ampules or vials

WHAT IS A SHARPS CONTAINER?

- A rigid, plastic, puncture and leak proof container
- Needs to be a closable container
- Needs to be clearly labelled as biohazardous
- Comes in different sizes
- Safely stores sharps until disposal

TIPS FOR SAFE SHARPS HANDLING:

DO'S

- **Do** use single use, safety engineered devices
- **Do** dispose of sharps immediately after use
- **Do** keep sharps container close to point of use to limit distance from point of use to disposal
- **Do** secure the lid once $\frac{3}{4}$ full or fill line reached

DON'TS

- **Never** recap used needle
- **Never** carry an uncapped, used needle
- **Never** pick up sharps with your bare hands
- **Never** retrieve items from sharps containers
- **Never** overfill sharps containers- do not fill over $\frac{3}{4}$ full or beyond the fill line
- **Never** attempt to remove a used needle from the syringe

