



# Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

## Reference Guide

All staff involved in the administration of a drug or other substance should be trained in the ***“safe disposal of syringes and other sharps”***.

To protect yourself against injury and illness and understand how to safely handle and dispose of sharps, this presentation;

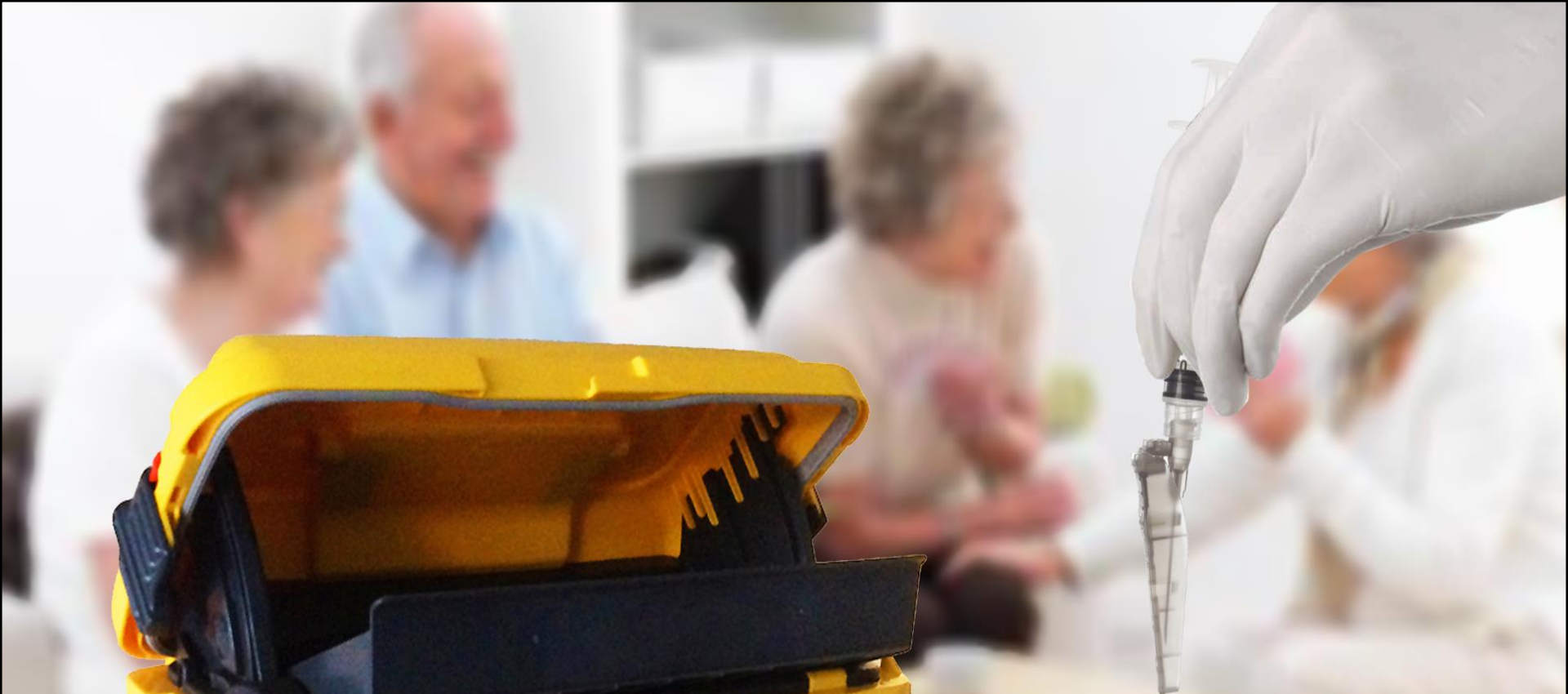
1. Defines sharps and explains how to safely dispose of sharps.
2. Provides safe practice tips for the handling of sharps.
3. Explains how to prevent needlestick injuries.

A separate quiz is available to ensure you have a complete understanding of the safe disposal of syringes and other sharps.

Our **“Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps”** educational package includes:

- ✓ Educational PowerPoint Presentation
- ✓ Newsletter
- ✓ Clinical Poster/Tool
- ✓ FAQ
- ✓ Quiz and Answer Sheet
- ✓ Certificate of Completion

Ask your **Remedy'sRx Pharmacist** for these educational tools.



# Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

Date

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# Introductions

## ➤ Name and designation(s) of presenter

Title of presenter

# Agenda

Definitions - Sharps

Safe Handling Tips

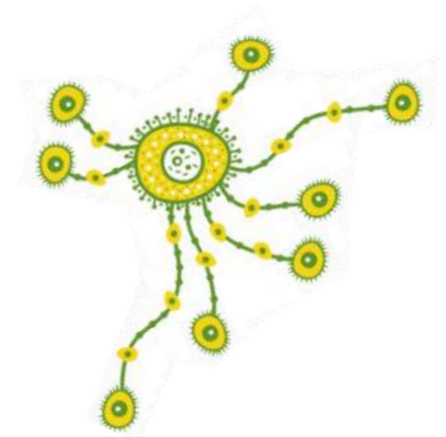
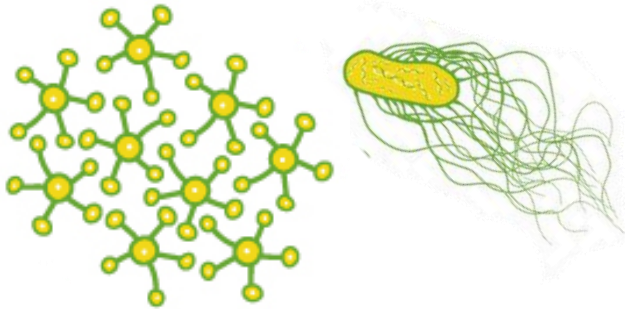
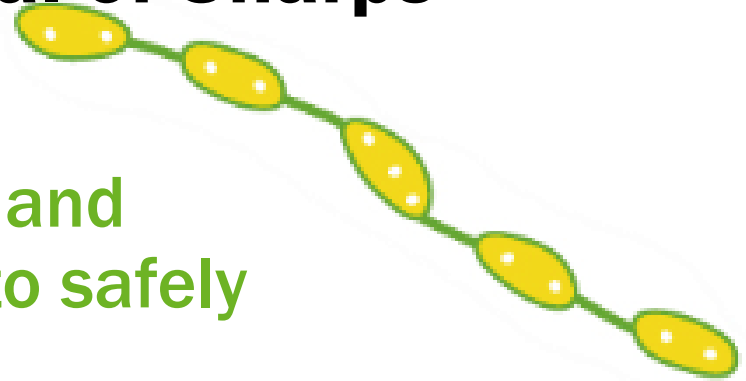
Needle Stick Injuries

Questions & Quiz

# Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

Protect yourself against injury and illness by understanding how to safely handle and dispose of sharps

- Accidental exposure to contaminated needles can expose healthcare staff to hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS (and other infections)



# What are Sharps?

- Needles, with or without syringes, including insulin pen needles
- Lancets or blades
- Broken medication ampoules or vials





# What is a Sharps Container?

- A rigid, plastic, puncture and leak proof container
- Closable container and clearly labeled as containing hazardous material
- Safely stores sharps until disposal
- Available in different sizes and colours suitable for storage in medication rooms, resident rooms or on medication carts
  - **Red containers** are used for cytotoxic medications/sharps; these container and contents are incinerated upon disposal
  - **Yellow containers** are used for sharps; these container and contents are disinfected (autoclaved) upon disposal





# Safe Practice Tips for Handling of Sharps

- All sharps are disposed of in a sharps container
- **Never** recap needles
- **Never** attempt to retrieve anything from a sharps container
- **Never** dispose of sharps in the regular garbage
- Use single-use, safety engineered needles  
e.g. retractable needles, needle covers
- Residents administering their own injectable medication  
(e.g. insulin) must dispose of sharps into a sharps  
container located in their room

# Safe Practice Tips for Handling of Sharps

- Dispose of sharps immediately after use
- Keep the sharps container near the point of use (e.g. on the med cart, in med room, in resident's room) to limit distance between use and disposal
- Do not fill a sharps container more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full or beyond the “fill” line
  - Overfilled containers increase the risk of needlestick injury



# Safe Practice Tips for Handling of Sharps

- Once the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, secure the lid and set aside for pickup/destruction
- Regular medications are NOT disposed of in the yellow sharps container and should be placed in the white medication disposal pails
- **Red cytotoxic containers** are used for the disposal of cytotoxic medications and any needles, syringes or other medical supplies contaminated with cytotoxic waste



# Safe Practice Tips for Handling of Sharps



## Sharps Container

- Disposal of needles, lancets, broken ampoules
- Autoclaved to disinfect the contents
- **NOT** for disposal of medication

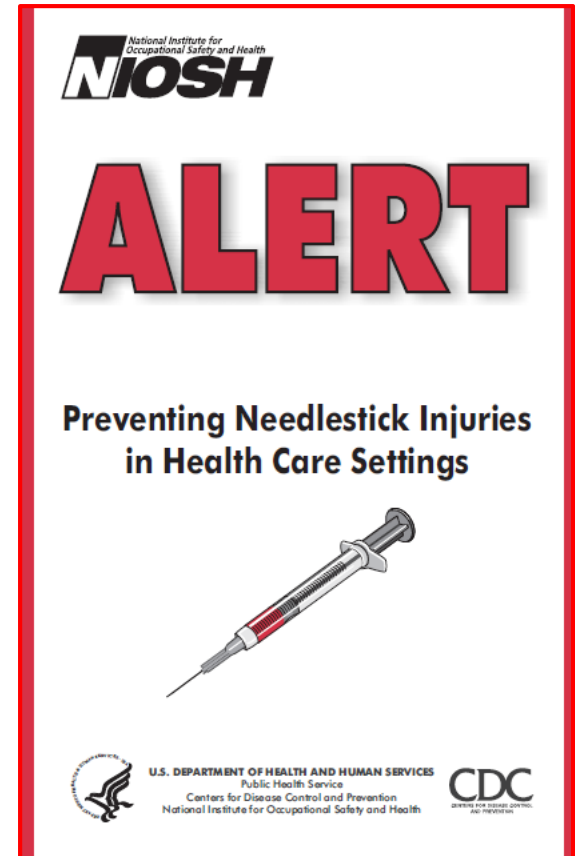


## Cytotoxic Sharps Container

- Disposal of cytotoxic medication and/or needles, ampoules, etc. contaminated with cytotoxic medications
- Incinerated to destroy the contents

# Needlestick Injuries

- Most injuries occur when recapping needles. **Never recap** used needles.
- Removing needles from a syringe increases risk of needlestick injury. Used needles should always be left attached to the syringe for disposal.
- It is not safe to carry an uncapped, used needle. Discard immediately after use into a sharps container.

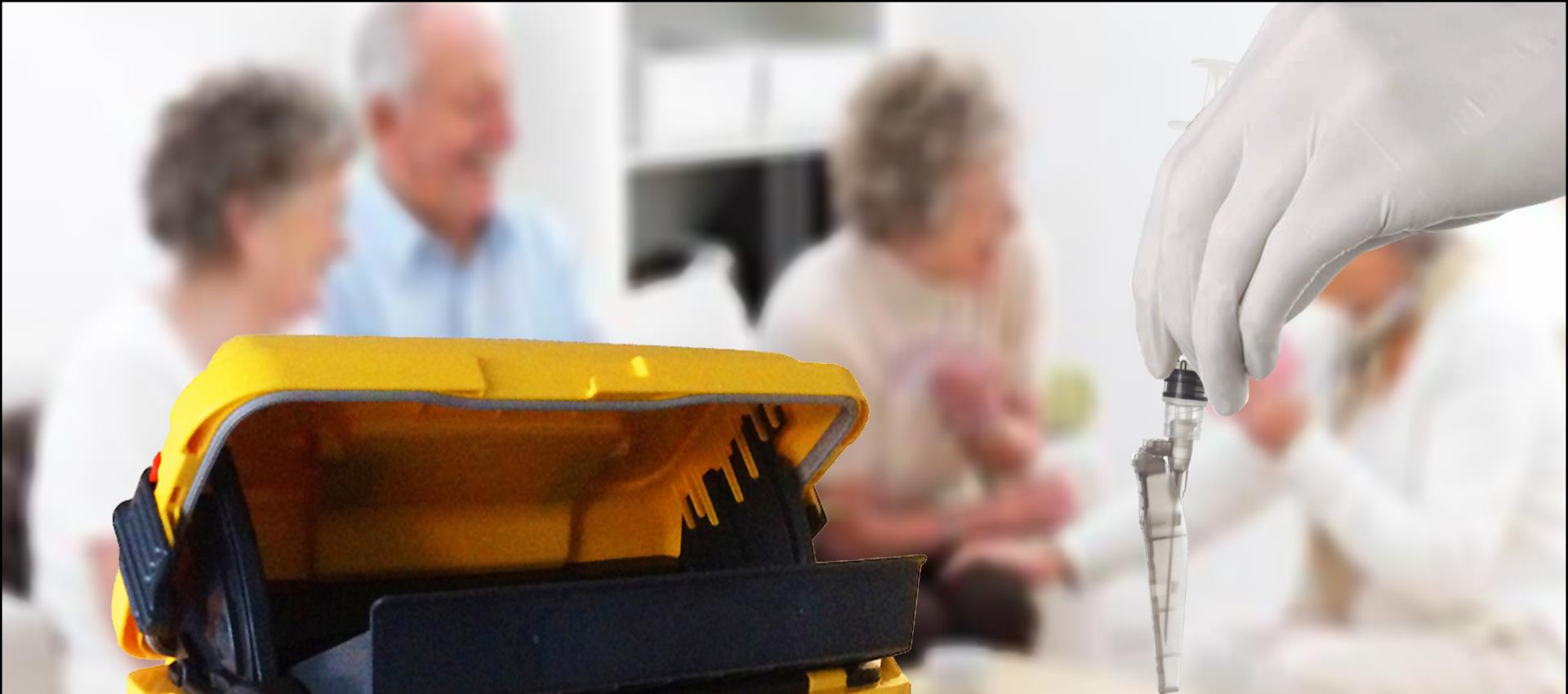


# Needlestick Injuries

➤ In the event of a needlestick injury

1. Seek emergency first aid
  - Flush area with water
2. Report all injuries to your manager
3. Follow up by visiting your physician or a Medical Clinic as soon as possible (immediately)





**Ask your Remedy'sRx Pharmacist for additional tools on the safe handling and disposal of sharps.**

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**Remedy'sRx**  
Specialty Pharmacy

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# References

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.  
Needlestick and Sharps Injuries.  
[http://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/needlestick\\_injuries.html](http://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/needlestick_injuries.html)  
accessed 14 Dec 2015
- Remedy'sRx Policy and Procedure Manual

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Quiz to be completed at **least annually** following a review of the Safe Handling and Disposal of Syringes Slide deck and the FAQ-Sharps information sheet.

1. Which of the following should be disposed of in the yellow sharps container (select all correct answers):
  - a. Insulin pen needles
  - b. Lancets
  - c. FentaNYL patches
  - d. Broken ampoules
  
2. Which of the following should be disposed of in the red cytotoxic container(select all correct answers) :
  - a. All needles and syringes
  - b. FentaNYL patches
  - c. Needles used for the administration of cytotoxic medication
  - d. Broken ampoules containing cytotoxic medication
  
3. Which of the following are recommended practices to **reduce risk** of needlestick injuries (select all correct answers):
  - a. Never retrieve anything from a sharps container
  - b. Never recap a used needle
  - c. Use safety engineered needles (retractable or with needle covers)
  - d. Do not overfill the sharps container
  
4. Which of the following practices may **contribute to the risk** of needlestick injury (select all correct answers):
  - a. Carrying an uncapped used, needle
  - b. Keeping a sharps container on the medication cart
  - c. Removing a needle from the syringe
  - d. Recapping needles
  
5. In the event of a needle stick injury (select all correct answers):
  - a. Seek emergency first aid
  - b. Visit your physician or a medical clinical as soon as possible
  - c. Report your injury to your manager

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Quiz to be completed at *least annually* following a review of the Safe Handling and Disposal of Syringes Slide deck and the FAQ-Sharps information sheet.

1. **Which of the following should be disposed of in the yellow sharps container:**  
Insulin pen needles, lancets and broken ampoules should be disposed of into the sharps container. FentaNYL patches should be disposed of with medication disposal.
2. **Which of the following should be disposed of in the red cytotoxic container:**  
Most sharps will be disposed of in the yellow sharps container however ampoules or needles and syringes used to administer cytotoxic medication, such as methotrexate, are disposed of in the red cytotoxic medication container.
3. **Which of the following are recommended practices to reduce risk of needlestick injuries:**  
Safe practices include all of
  - a. Never retrieve anything from a sharps container
  - b. Never recap a used needle
  - c. Use safety engineered needles (retractable or with needle covers)
  - d. Do not overfill the sharps container
4. **Which of the following practices may contribute to the risk of needlestick injury:**  
Risky practices include carrying an uncapped used, needle, removing a needle from the syringe and recapping needles.  
It is a good practice to keep a sharps container on the medication cart so needles and syringes can be disposed of immediately after use.
5. **In the event of a needle stick injury:**  
All of the following steps should be taken following a needle stick injury:
  - a. Seek emergency first aid
  - b. Visit your physician or a medical clinical as soon as possible
  - c. Report your injury to your manager



# Certificate of Attendance

On [insert date]

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(Name of Attendee)

Attended [1.0] hour(s) of Professional education in-service on:  
Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

Presented by:  
[Name of presenter and designation]



Your Partner In Care

### What are Sharps?

Sharps are needles, syringes and other sharp objects used for medical purposes that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion including:

- Needles with or without syringes, including insulin pen needles
- Lancets or blades
- Broken medication ampoules or vials

### Where do I dispose of sharps?

All sharps are disposed of in a sharps or cytotoxic disposal container. A sharps or cytotoxic disposal container is a rigid plastic, puncture and leak proof container, used to safely store sharps until they can be disposed of. Containers must be closable and clearly labeled as containing hazardous material. They come in different shapes, colours and sizes suitable for storage in medication rooms, resident rooms or carts. **Never** discard unused **medications** in the yellow sharps containers.

### What is the difference between the red and yellow disposal containers?

The yellow container is for the disposal of sharps only. Medications should not be placed into the yellow sharps container. Yellow containers are autoclaved upon disposal to disinfect the contents.

The red container is for the disposal of cytotoxic materials. Any cytotoxic medication, cytotoxic medication containers or supplies used to administer cytotoxic medications, such as needles and syringes are disposed of in the red cytotoxic container. For example, following administration of a methotrexate injection both the broken ampoule and the syringe are disposed of in the red cytotoxic medication container. Red cytotoxic medication containers are incinerated upon disposal to ensure that the medications are destroyed.

### How can I avoid needlestick injuries?

#### Do's

- Use single-use, safety engineered needles
- Dispose of sharps into the sharps container immediately after use
- Keep sharps container near point of use
- Secure lid once the sharps container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full
- Dispose of cytotoxic sharps in the cytotoxic container

#### Don'ts

- Never recap needles
- Never retrieve items from a sharps container
- Never carry an uncapped, used needle
- Never dispose of sharps with regular garbage
- Never fill the sharps container beyond  $\frac{3}{4}$  full
- Never attempt to remove a used needle from a syringe

### What should I do if I get a needlestick injury?

In the event of accidental sharps injury, seek immediate first aid. Follow up by visiting your physician or a medical clinic as soon as possible. All needlestick injuries must be reported to your manager.

## Safe Handling and Disposal of Syringes and Other Sharps

### Why is safe handling important?

It is important for healthcare staff to protect themselves against illness and injury by understanding how to safely handle and dispose of sharps. Safe handling and disposal of sharps is important to minimize the risk of accidental injury and exposure to potentially infectious blood-borne viruses. Accidental punctures by contaminated needles can expose healthcare staff to illnesses such as hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C.

The risk of infection following exposure to a contaminated needle varies by type of infection. Following exposure to a needle contaminated with hepatitis B, there is a 6-30% risk of becoming infected. Following exposure to a needle contaminated with HIV, there is a 0.3% chance of infection and following exposure to a needle contaminated with hepatitis C, there is a 2% chance of infection. In rare circumstances, it is also possible to transmit other illnesses such as herpes, malaria or tuberculosis, among others.

### What is a needlestick or sharps injury?

Needlestick injuries are wounds caused by needles or other sharp medical waste items that accidentally puncture the skin. These injuries can occur during the use or disposal of needles or other sharp medical waste.

### What should be done in the event of a needlestick injury?

It is important to seek immediate emergency first aid following any needlestick injury and to follow up as soon as possible by visiting your physician or a medical clinic. All needlestick injuries must be reported to your immediate supervisor.

### OUCH! Here are some common causes of needlestick injury:

- **Most injuries related to sharps occur** when the healthcare staff replace the cap on a used needle. Never recap used needles. Always use safety engineered needles.
- **It is not safe to carry an uncapped, used needle.** They should be discarded immediately into an appropriate sharps container.
- **Removing needles from a syringe** increases the risk of needlestick injuries. Used needles should always be left attached to the syringe.

## What are sharps?

Sharps are needles, syringes and other sharp objects used for medical purposes that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion, including:

- Needles with or without syringes, including insulin pen needles
- Lancets or blades
- Broken medication ampoules or vials

## What is a sharps container?

A sharps container is a rigid plastic puncture- and leak-proof container used to safely store sharps until they can be disposed of. Sharps containers must be closable and clearly labeled as containing hazardous material. They come in different shapes, colours and sizes suitable for storage in medication rooms, resident rooms and carts. **Never discard unused medications in the yellow sharps containers.**



Sharps container



Cytotoxic sharps container

## DID YOU KNOW?

What happens to sharps and unused medications when they leave your home?

Yellow Sharps Container	→	Autoclaved
Red Cytotoxic Container	→	Incinerated
Pharmaceutical and Cytotoxic Waste	→	Incinerated

**This is why it's important NOT to discard unused medication in the yellow sharps container!**

## Safe practice tips for the handling of sharps:

- **Never** recap needles.
- **Never** attempt to retrieve anything from a sharps container.
- **Never** dispose of sharps in the regular garbage.
- **Always** use single-use, safety engineered needles.
- **Dispose** of sharps into sharps containers immediately after use.
- **Keep** sharps containers near the point of use (e.g. on the medication cart, in the medication room or in the resident's room) to limit distance between use and disposal.
- **Do not** fill a sharps container more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full or beyond the "fill" line. An overfilled container could cause a needlestick injury.
- **When** the sharps container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, secure the lid and store safely for pickup/destruction.
- **Sharps** that contain cytotoxic medications (e.g. methotrexate injection) are to be disposed of in the red cytotoxic containers.
- **Residents** and individuals that are self-injecting must dispose of all sharps into an approved sharps container.



## Safe Handling and Disposal of Syringes and Other Sharps

### What are sharps?

Sharps are needles, syringes and other sharp objects used for medical purposes that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion, including:

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Sharps container



Cytotoxic sharps container

### DID YOU KNOW?

What happens to sharps and unused medications when they leave your home?

Yellow Sharps Container → Autoclaved

Red Cytotoxic Container → Incinerated

Pharmaceutical and Cytotoxic Waste → Incinerated

**This is why it's important NOT to discard unused medication in the yellow sharps container!**

### Safe practice tips for the handling of sharps:

- **Never** recap needles.
- **Never** attempt to retrieve anything from a sharps container.
- **Never** dispose of sharps in the regular garbage.
- **Always use single-use, safety engineered needles.**
- **Dispose of sharps** into sharps containers immediately after use.
- **Keep sharps containers near the point of use** (e.g. on the medication cart, in the medication room or in the resident's room) to limit distance between use and disposal.
- **Do not fill a sharps container more than ¾ full** or beyond the "fill" line. An overfilled container could cause a needlestick injury.
- **Once the sharps container is ¾ full**, secure the lid and store safely for pickup/destruction.
- **Sharps that contain cytotoxic medications** (e.g. methotrexate injection) are to be disposed of in the red cytotoxic containers.
- **Residents** and individuals that are self-injecting must dispose of all sharps into an approved sharps container.



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