

Sharps Safety and Prevention of Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens

Site Applicability

All PHC Acute and Long Term Care Sites.

Practice Level

Basic: All direct care staff

Standard

Use of safety-engineered sharps devices is recommended where available.

Needles should not be recapped; used needles and other single-use sharp items should be disposed of immediately into designated puncture-resistant containers that are easily accessible and located at the point of care.

Any individual who uses a disposable sharp item (i.e. needles, scalpel blades, etc.) is responsible for its safe disposal into the appropriate puncture-resistant container.

- Keep sharps containers upright during use (attached to a wall or other structure or retained in a holder). Do not place or store other medical equipment/supplies on the surface of the sharps container.
- Replace sharps containers on a routine basis or when they are 3/4 full. Do not allow container to overfill.
- Store and process contaminated reusable sharps in a manner that does not place the patient/resident or worker at risk for injury.

Healthcare workers should cover open skin areas/lesions on hands/forearms with a dry dressing while at work and should consult Occupational Health and Safety if the dressing interferes with their ability to perform hand hygiene.

Gloves should be worn if contact with blood or body fluid is anticipated. Eyes, nose and mouth should be protected using facial protection and gowns should be worn if splashes with blood or other body fluids are anticipated. If an exposure to blood or body fluid should occur:

- First aid must be performed immediately
- Thoroughly rinse/flush the exposure site (e.g., percutaneous puncture injury, mucous membranes of eyes/nose/mouth, or non-intact skin) with running water.

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- The exposure must be reported.
- Medical attention should be sought.

Related Documents

- [B-00-07-13088](#) - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Infection Control
- [B-00-07-13081](#) - Point of Care Risk Assessment - IPAC Best Practice Guideline
- [B-00-07-13045](#) - Routine Practices - Infection Control

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). 2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/isolation-guidelines-H.pdf>

Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. (2012). Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings. Retrieved from https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/B/2012/bp-rpap-healthcare-settings.pdf?sc_lang=en

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2017). Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/routine-practices-precautions-healthcare-associated-infections.html>

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