

HOW TO PREVENT SHARPS INJURIES

Sharps injuries (SI) may result in exposure to any of 60 different pathogens including Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, and recent surveys confirm that SI are a persistent and challenging problem. So here's the basics on **how to prevent a sharp injury...**

- 1 Ensure you are trained in the procedure and the device.
- 2 Don't rush a procedure.
- 3 Always use a sharps safety device where available.
- 4 Before procedure, ensure a sharps container is close by, and the aperture is open and clear.
- 5 Immediately after use, activate the safety device and discard into a sharps container.
- 6 Do not remove or recap a needle.
- 7 Never pass a sharp by hand, use a neutral zone.
- 8 If you drop a sharp, never leave it for someone else to pick-up.
- 9 Ensure a sharps container is closed before you move it.
- 10 Never overfill a sharps container.
- 11 Always report your injury.

Dr Linda Good and Terry Grimmond, in their surveys, found there are hospitals with SI rates consistently and significantly below the national average. Here's what they do that's different...

Their creative practices fell into 5 strategies.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Ensure competency for all new staff; re-training after injury or every 2 years.

COMMUNICATION

Injury rates & strategies are transparent to all staff; Non-Safety Engineered Device to be used with permission.

INVESTIGATION

Reporting SI should be made easy 24/7; "drill down" on every injury; seek safer safety devices.

ENGAGEMENT

Hold users and managers responsible for safety and Safety Forums.

LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Align strategies with organisation's goals; Use Exec as "back-up".