

HOW TO PREVENT SHARPS INJURIES

Sharps injuries (SI) may result in exposure to any of 60 different pathogens including HIV, HBV or HCV, and recent surveys confirm that SI are a persistent and challenging problem. So here's the basics on **how to not get stuck...**

- 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 In the OR, 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. Never.
- 11 Always report your injury.

Dr Linda Good and Terry Grimmond, in their EXPO-S.T.O.P. 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-SED 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 organization's goals; Use Exec as "back-up".

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