



TODAY'S SAFETY TALK – TRAINING SESSIONS TO PREVENT INJURIES AND INCIDENTS

# TAKE A MINUTE FOR YOUR SAFETY

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## NEEDLE STICKS AND SHARPS INJURIES

### **Hazards of Sharps**

Used needles and other sharps are dangerous to people and pets if not used and disposed of safely. Contaminated sharps can spread infections that cause serious health conditions. Some of the most common pathogens potentially transmitted through contaminated sharps are hepatitis B, hepatitis C and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Needle sticks and sharps injuries can be serious, but we can control and minimize the risks with prevention techniques, proper preparation and understanding. Your health and safety are important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

### **Sharps Use**

When using needles, remember the following best practices to avoid a needle stick:

- Do not recap needles. It is too easy to miss the needle with the cap and poke a finger.
- Always use needle safety devices when available every time. [*Instructor Prompt: Demonstrate the proper use of a needle safety device (if available).*]
- Use needleless devices when available.
- Always pay attention to your surroundings and others when using needles. Many needle sticks occur when the patient moves unexpectedly or when sharps are disposed of improperly.
- Dispose of the needles in an approved sharps container; never dispose of a needle in the garbage.

### **Sharps Containers**

Poor sharps disposal practices cause or contribute to many sharps injuries. Disposing of needles or contaminated sharps in garbage cans, recycling bins or flushing them down the toilet puts trash workers, janitors, sewage workers, housekeepers, household members, children, and pets at risk of injury. Instead, dispose of needles or sharps in a sharps container.

A sharps container is designed to hold needles or other sharps and are marked with the biohazard symbol. [*Instructor Prompt: Have an empty box to remind people of the appearance. Also, demonstrate how safely to add a sharp to the box. Tell the class where the boxes are located or ask employees to tell the locations and correct as needed.*]

- Keep the sharps containers out of the reach of children.

- Do not empty one sharps container into another
- Do not overfill the sharps container. Many needle stick injuries occur when someone tries to overfill a container. If a container is full, please make sure you report it to have it changed.

### **Needle Sticks or Sharps Injury**

If you experience a needle stick or sharps injury or are exposed to blood or other body fluid:

- Wash puncture or cuts with soap and water.
- Flush the nose, mouth, or skin with water if there is a splash.
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline or sterile irrigates for eye exposure.
- Report the incident to your supervisor.
- Seek medical treatment.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How else can we prevent or reduce the risk of sharps injuries?
- What do we do if we experience a needle stick or sharps injury?
- What locations have sharps containers, and what other places may need them that do not have them?
- How do we report full sharps containers to be replaced?

# TAKE A MINUTE FOR YOUR SAFETY SIGN-IN SHEET

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TOPIC(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

Signature

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