



PUNCTURE WOUNDS

Punctures from sharp implements and needles are a common kind of injury. For example, among health care workers alone, it is estimated that there are over 2,000 such injuries each day.

To prevent these injuries:

1. Never leave a sharp instrument where someone else can touch it. Put it in the proper storage crib, or the proper waste disposal container. If the proper disposal container isn't available, use a temporary container to carry it to the proper one.
2. Manipulate the instrument properly. Don't allow distractions that might make you handle the instrument improperly or not dispose of it immediately. Never put "sharps" down on chairs, floors, or equipment. Make sure needles or sharp implements are not left exposed.
3. Use the proper sheath for the instrument when you are finished with it. If resheathing a needle is necessary, replace the needle without touching or holding the cap. But try to avoid having to recap a needle, since needles often pierce through the cap. Remove exposed needles from tubing or other materials without touching them. Pry them off with a clamp, drop them into a disposal container, or cut the tubing using clamp and scissors and let the needle drop into the disposal container.
4. Dispose of implements and needles properly. When you are finished, return instruments to the proper storage, or discard them in the correct kind of storage container or waste container.
5. Keep puncture-resistant disposal containers at all work areas where sharp instruments and needles may be discarded. Dispose of the implements, needles, syringes, etc. Dispose of immediately after use, do not set them down temporarily somewhere else. Don't remove needles from syringes; dispose of both, where possible. Dispose of needles and sharp implements one at a time; don't try to handle several at once.
6. Never reach into disposal containers. If flexible tubing or other things need to be pushed into a container, do not use your fingers. Find a tool for the job.
7. Dispose of disposal containers. Do not overfill puncture-resistant containers. Replace them before they fill up.

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