



# **Sharps Policy**

REVISED APRIL 2013

## SHARPS SAFETY POLICY

A sharps injury is defined as an injury where a needle or other sharp object, contaminated with blood or other body fluid, penetrates the skin. This also includes human bites and scratches that break the skin

This policy provides a clear, evidence-based framework to ensure safe practice when sharps are used, thereby minimising injuries caused by contaminated sharps. It is applicable to all staff who handle sharp items during the course of their employment, and applies at all times, in all situations.

The vast majority of sharps injuries are avoidable, and occur when sharps are handled or disposed of in an unsafe manner. Staff should follow this guidance in order to minimise the likelihood of sharps injuries occurring.

The use of sharps should be avoided where possible. When their use is essential, particular care is required in handling and disposal. If possible, use safer sharps devices.

Sharps must always be handled carefully, in accordance with the following principles;

Do not re-sheath used needles

In **exceptional** circumstances, if resheathing **CANNOT** be avoided, use a specific needle resheathing/removing device

Always get help when using sharps with a confused or agitated patient

**Never pass sharps from person to person by hand**

Never walk around with sharps in your hand

Never leave sharps lying around . dispose of them yourself

Dispose of sharps at the point of use . take a sharps bin with you

**Dispose of syringes and needles as a single unit – do not remove the needle first**

**Use needleless intravenous devices and safer needle systems whenever possible, where available**

### Use of Sharps Bins

Sharps must only be disposed of in designated sharps bins that meet the requirements of the British Standard: BS 7320 (1990)

Always assemble sharps bins correctly  
Lid on properly  
Label completed  
Placed in suitable, safe location

Always carry a sharps bin by the handle, never place it against your body

Never overfill a sharps bin . replace it when filled to the line marked

Ensure sharps bins are closed and locked before disposal, and complete the label on the bin

### **Actions in the event of a sharps injury**

If a sharps injury does occur, the following action must be taken **IMMEDIATELY**:

