



# MAKE SMART INJECTION CHOICES

PREVENT NEEDLE-STICK  
INJURIES



World Health  
Organization

# MAKING SAFE INJECTION CHOICES

## WHAT KINDS OF NEEDLES USUALLY CAUSE NEEDLE-STICK INJURIES?

- Hypodermic needles
- Blood collection needles
- Suture needles
- Needles used in intravenous delivery systems

## WHEN NEEDLE-STICK INJURIES OCCUR

**Needle-stick injuries are most often associated with the following activities:**



Sudden patient movement during the injection



Recapping needles



Transferring body fluid between containers



Failing to dispose of used needles properly in a puncture-proof safety box



## IF YOU GET A NEEDLE-STICK INJURY:

**Take the following actions immediately:**

- Wash the wound with soap and water.
- Inform your supervisor and follow the needle-stick injury reporting mechanism of your health facility.
- Identify the source patient, who should be tested for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infections.
  - Tests should be carried out after patient consent.
- Get tested for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infections.
- Read WHO Best Practices for Injections and Related Procedures Toolkit: [www.who.int/entity/infection-prevention/tools/injections/9789241599252](http://www.who.int/entity/infection-prevention/tools/injections/9789241599252)

**NEEDLE-STICK INJURIES EXPOSE YOU TO A NUMBER OF BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS THAT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS OR EVEN FATAL INFECTIONS.**

# GUIDANCE ON PROTECTION

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

**Preventing needle-stick injuries is the best way to protect yourself:**



- ✓ Use safety syringes with a sharps injury protection (SIP) feature as recommended by WHO.
- ✓ WHO recommends that health care workers and others who may be exposed to blood and blood products through their work should be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- ✓ Plan safe handling and disposal of needles before using them, e.g. make sure there is a safety box at arm's reach when you give an injection.
- ✓ If you have to transport the safety box to another room or to a disposal site, carry it carefully holding it at the top, above the level of the needles.
- ✗ **Never re-cap needles.**  
Place them uncapped into a sharps container immediately.
- ✗ **Never open a safety box.**  
Store in a safe and secure place until it is ready for final disposal.
- ✗ **Never fill a safety box more than three-quarters full.**

**AVOID GIVING  
INJECTIONS FOR HEALTH  
CONDITIONS WHERE  
ORAL FORMULATIONS  
ARE AVAILABLE AS THE  
FIRST-LINE TREATMENT.**

# PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

## HOW CAN I PROTECT OTHERS?

- Ensure that all staff in your area are educated on the risks of needle-stick injuries and given appropriate training. This is especially important for housekeeping staff or sanitation workers who do not have medical or nursing training.
- Take time to explain risks, especially if you observe risky or dangerous procedures or behaviours among your colleagues.
- Ensure waste is disposed of properly within the facility. It is your responsibility to ensure no infected waste reaches the community, where these items can be attractive to children to play with.  
For further information please visit: [www.who.int/infection-prevention](http://www.who.int/infection-prevention)

