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Occupational Health Services

The University of Manchester

Waterloo Place

182/184 Oxford Road

Manchester

M13 9GP

Tel: 0161 275 2858

Fax: 0161 275 3137

Email: [waterlooocchealth@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:waterlooocchealth@manchester.ac.uk)

**INNOCULATION INJURIES PREVENTION AND ADVICE FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS**

An inoculation injury can be from:

* A needlestick injury or a cut with a sharp instrument e.g. lancet in theatre.
* Blood or other body fluids coming into contact with non-intact skin

(e.g. cuts, abrasions, sores, chapped skin, etc) or mucous membranes, including the eyes and mouth.

* Bites from patients; therefore this advice should be followed in the event of a bite from a patient.

***The vast majority of inoculation injuries are preventable by employing safe working practices and applying universal precautions and prevention should be the mainstay of any inoculation policy. It is your responsibility to ensure that your working practices do not put yourself or others at unnecessary risk.***

**PREVENTION:**

Avoid inoculation injury by using these simple measures.

* Dispose of the sharp into the bin provided immediately after use.
* Never lay used sharps down on bedside lockers, window sills or work surfaces, or leave lying amongst swabs, paper towels or linen.
* Never re-sheath used needles.
* Pick up all dropped sharps carefully and dispose of them safely.
* Remember! **Open-Use-Dispose**. Do not let anything interrupt this sequence of events.
* Cover all cuts and breaks in your skin with waterproof dressings or gloves.
* Wash your hands thoroughly after accidental splashing.
* Wear spectacles, goggles or visor when dealing with hazardous materials particularly blood and other body substances which may splash in eyes or mouth.
* If you have a skin problem such as eczema, seek advice form the Occupational Health Service.
* Hands must never be inserted into the sharps bin.
* Close sharps bin and lock securely – never fill beyond 3/4 full.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF AN INNOCULATION INJURY**

**Bleed it** – encourage the wound to bleed (**do not** suck it)

**Clean it** – wash the wound in clean water. Splashes to the eyes should be bathed with copious amounts of clean tap water as soon as possible.

**Cover it** – cover the wound with a waterproof dressing.

**Report it** – report the injury to your Line Manager as soon as possible.

Attend the Occupational Health Service (OHS) for assessment at Waterloo Place (between the hours of 9.00am – 4.30pm) or at the Trust Hospital where you are working.

If out of office hours, assessment and treatment of the inoculation injury should be undertaken by the Accident & Emergency (A&E) Department.

***The OHS or A&E should be informed immediately (within the hour) if you have sustained a high risk (known or suspected HIV) injury so that you can be considered for post exposure prophylactic treatment. (PEP)***

Your follow-up appointments should take place at Occupational Health Service, Waterloo Place

*For further information please refer to the Sharps Injury Protocol on the University Occupational Health web page*