

Heales Medical



Sharps Injuries

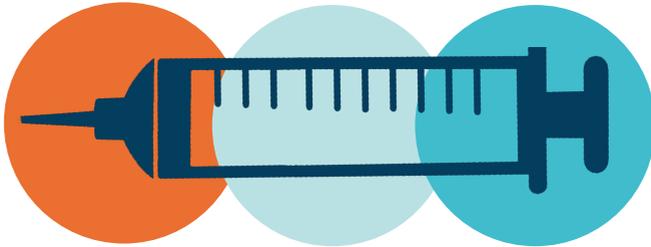
What happens next?



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Needle-stick or sharps injuries are a known risk for healthcare workers and if you have sustained one of these injuries it can become quite stressful or scary as to what will happen next.

This leaflet is here so you know what to expect when you first sustain an injury, the occupational health reporting process, the triage with an occupational health nurse and the following processes of potential blood tests and immunisations.



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What is a sharps injury and is it really that serious?

A sharps injury is an incident, which causes a needle, blade (such as scalpel or dental probes) or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin. This is sometimes called a percutaneous injury.

In the event of such injuries, there is a small, but identifiable risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), from the patients bodily fluid meeting yours.

Remember that the Hepatitis B virus can remain active in dried blood for up to one week. So check your Hepatitis B immunisations are up to date.



Immediate Response

When you have sustained a needle stick or sharps injury be sure to:



**ENCOURAGE
BLEEDING**



**WASH AREA
IMMEDIATELY**



**CALL
OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH**



**REPORT AND
COMPLETE
INCIDENT FORM**

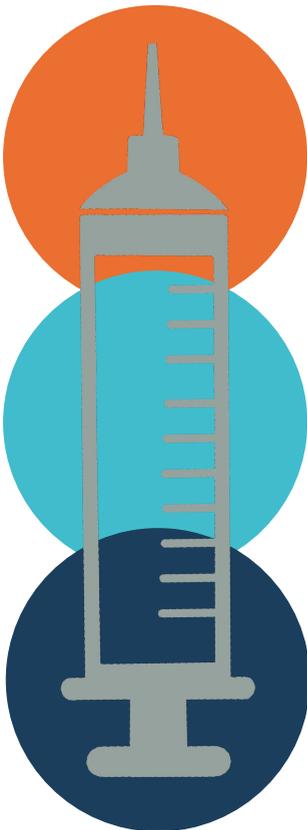
Calling the NSI Hotline

When you call our NSI hotline (9.00am-5pm) you will be connected to a medical administrator. The Medical administrator will firstly ask for your practice address and personal details (full name, age, email address ect.) to set up a case on our system.



Once your case is created, the medical administrator will then go through the NSI Incident form with you, this form asks questions on the incident itself (time, immediate response, instrument, occurrence), any information known about the source patient (the patient the instrument was previously used on) and your immunisation history (tetanus and Hep B immunisation, you may need to check with your GP).

The NSI Incident form will then be reviewed by one of our Occupational Health Nurses (OHN) who will then contact you by phone to go through the details and assess the contamination risk. You will then be advised as to what will happen next.



The Source Person/ Patient

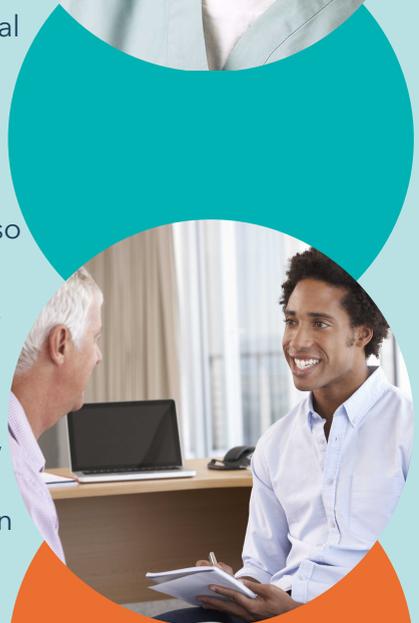
If the source patient is known then it is the responsibility of the manager or clinician in charge to advise the source person/ patient to undergo a blood test either at the clinic (if facilities allow) or at their GP, and for the result to be anonymised and Occupational Health to be notified.

These results can be relayed by either phone or email with the results referencing the injured employees case.

If the patient refuses consent, the clinical team feel that it would be detrimental for the patient to be approached or there is any other reason why the testing cannot be done, then Occupational Health must be advised so it can be documented in the staff member's occupational health records.

If the patient is known to be positive with HIV, Hep B or or Hep C then Occupational Health **MUST** be notified, so that the requirement for post-exposure prophylactic (PEP) medication can be assessed.

The advantage of knowing the status of the source patient is that if they prove negative then follow up testing of the injured employee is not required.



Serum Save

The first blood test that will be carried out is a serum save, this can be done at A&E if that is what is advised by the OH nurse, it can also be done at an appointment with an OH nurse or by a blood test/ self-test kit (see section below).

The serum save should be taken within seven days of the injury occurring, this is why reporting an injury as soon as possible is so crucial.

The serum save is a blood sample that is stored without being tested, this will only be tested if any subsequent blood tests in this process return a positive result. This is so it can be determined if the contamination injury is the actual cause of any positive results.

Follow up testing process

When the source patient is unknown or the source has declined testing or cannot be tested, the following appointments will be required:

This will also be the case when a source patient is positive to a BBV, with additional testing and follow up bloods, case dependant.

- 6 weeks- Hep C PCR (on TDL form QPCR) (also called Hep C RNA)
 - 12 Weeks- Hep C PCR (on TDL form QPCR) (also called Hep C RNA) and HIV Antibody
- or 12 weeks post-treatment (one a blood test appointment and the same blood tube can be used for both tests no immunisations)
- 6 months-D HBsAg if the Injured Party (anti-HBs levels <1 0mIU/ml at time of injury)'

Most HCW who sustain an NSI will follow this programme, however, there can be variations depending on the specific details of the injury, so OH will advise if your programme is different and how.

Blood test/ Self-test kit

A blood test/ self-test kit can be sent to your workplace (the place where you sustained the injury) to have a blood sample taken either by yourself (self-test kit), a clinical colleague, or at your local GP.

The kit itself will contain:

- The testing kit
- A plastic envelope
- A validation form
- A paper envelope

The sample taken using the kit is then placed in the plastic envelope and sent to the laboratory.

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The validation form is to be signed by either a clinical witness (to your self-test) or by the clinical colleague taking your blood test. This form is then sent in the paper envelope to the Heales Medical head office to be added to your case. Note: without this validation form your blood sample will not be valid as it confirms the sample is yours.

The blood-test/ self-test kit is a way to reduce time taken out of work for appointments by making it easier for you. It can also reduce the amount of time before the blood sample is taken as we cannot guarantee an appointment local to you at short notice.



How does the process conclude?

If there is a positive test at any stage then the employee will be contacted by telephone by an Occupational Health Nurse to discuss the results and the next steps to be taken.

If every test throughout the process is negative then the employee will be notified of their results at the end of the process with a copy of their needle-stick record.



Contact us

If you have any questions about the NSI process please contact us at:

03333 449 089

info@heales.com

If you want to report an NSI please call:

03333 449 006

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