

Further information

If you require further information after a sharps or splash injury please do not hesitate to contact the Occupational Health Service at either UHW or UHL:

UHW 029 2074 3264 (x43264)

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm

UHL 029 2071 5140 (x25140)

Opening Hours: Tues-Thurs 9am to 5pm

Out of hours please contact Emergency Unit for advice via 02920 748025

www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/your-health-wellbeing

Occupational Health Departments are located at:

First Floor Denbigh House
University Hospital of Wales Cardiff
CF14 4XW

Roseway Lodge
University Hospital Llandough
Penarth
CF64 2XX

Accessing further counselling

Further counselling may be accessed via the Employee Wellbeing Service on:
02920 744465

References

HPA, (2020) Eye of the Needle 2020 Report, PHE.
DoH (2020) Immunisation Against Infectious Diseases [Online] Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/.../immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
Accessed 19/05/2020



EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICE
Occupational Health
Occupational Physiotherapy
Employee Wellbeing

Occupational Health Services

Information leaflet
following a needle stick or
similar sharps injury at work

First Aid

Bleed it
Wash it
Cover it
Report it

Please read this leaflet carefully.

If you have a sharps injury, Cardiff and Vale UHB has a policy to manage such injuries. The policy is available on CAV web. It is called the '**Infection Control Protocol for Needle stick and Similar Sharps Injuries**'.

A needle stick or similar sharps injury occurs when a person is exposed to another person's blood or other body fluid via:-

- a cut or broken skin
- a used needle or other sharp instrument
- a splash to eyes or mucous membranes
- a human bite

This leaflet explains what happens following such injuries as recommended within the '*Infection Control Protocol for Needle stick & Similar Sharps Injuries*'.

Blood testing immediately after a sharps injury

A blood sample will be taken from you and sent for storage at the time of the sharps or splash injury by Occupational Health / Emergency Unit / MEAU. This may be used to compare future blood test results.

If the source patient is known, a source patient risk assessment is undertaken using risk assessment forms 1 & 2. These forms may be downloaded from the '*Infection Control Protocol for Needle stick and Similar Sharps Injuries*' available on CAV web.

NB - The source patient risk assessment should be carried out by the health care professional responsible for the clinical care of the source patient.

It is NOT undertaken by the Occupational Health Service / Emergency Unit / MEAU staff and should never be completed by the injured person.

Follow up testing by Occupational Health

Post injury follow ups in Occupational Health are assessed on an individual basis. Routine follow up blood tests may include: Hepatitis B, C and HIV depending on your specific risk. It is important that you attend all sharps injury follow up appointments to safeguard yourself and others.

Hepatitis B

The risk of catching Hepatitis B is estimated at "1 in 3" from a source patient who is actively infectious with the Hepatitis B virus.

Hepatitis B may be transmitted through contact with any infected body fluid at the time of a sharps or splash injury.

Other modes of transmission may include: human bites, mother to baby transmission during pregnancy or breastfeeding, sharing razors and toothbrushes, sexual contact, IV drug use, tattoo's, body piercings, blood transfusions, surgery or dental work abroad where healthcare may be substandard compared to the UK.

NB - Hepatitis B vaccination is extremely effective at preventing the virus and a hepatitis B booster may be offered at the time of the injury

Hepatitis C

The risk of catching Hepatitis C is estimated at "1 in 30" from a source patient who is actively infectious with the Hepatitis C virus.

Hepatitis C may be transmitted through contact with infected blood at the time of a sharps injury. A very small number of cases are caught through sexual contact.

Other modes of transmission may include: IV drug use, mother to baby transmission during pregnancy, sharing razors and toothbrushes, tattoos, body piercings and blood transfusions, surgery or dental work abroad where healthcare may be substandard compared to the UK.

NB - Hepatitis C vaccine is not available therefore Hepatitis C follow up will be blood tests only.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The risk of catching HIV is estimated at "1 in 300" from a source patient who is actively infectious with the HIV virus. Becoming infected with HIV is rare as the virus is weak outside the body.

In a very small number of cases HIV virus may be transmitted through contact with blood at the time of a sharps injury.

Other modes of transmission may include: mother to baby transmission during pregnancy or breast feeding, through all forms of sexual intercourse, IV drug use, blood transfusions, surgery or dental work abroad where healthcare may be substandard.

NB - HIV post exposure prophylaxis following a high risk sharps or splash injury is effective at preventing the virus if given within 72 hours.

Employment / Social Risks

During the first six months after a sharps or splash injury it is possible to transmit a blood borne virus even if the initial blood test result is negative. It is therefore essential during the six month follow up period to strictly follow standard precautions at work and at home to protect others. Examples of Standard Infection Control Precautions at work may include using personal protective equipment such as wearing gloves, goggles, aprons, visors. Other examples are disposing of sharps safely & effective hand washing. It is not necessary to restrict work practices during follow up.

Socially it is important to practice safe sex for all types of sexual contact to prevent passing an infection to another person during follow up. Safe sex involves using barrier methods of protection i.e. condoms. Sharing razors, toothbrushes or any item that involves body fluid to body fluid contact should be avoided during follow up.

Pregnancy and breast feeding should also be avoided during follow up where possible.