



Needle-stick Injuries



Why we need your help



Beacon Hospital

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Q. What is a needle-stick injury?

- A. A needle-stick injury is when someone is injured with a used needle.
- Injuries to healthcare workers are not uncommon during work. Needle-stick injuries do occur and can occasionally cause infection in the injured person.
- Healthcare workers become worried and stressed after these injuries and we try to make every effort to help them.

Q. What types of equipment can be a risk for healthcare workers?

- A. Any needle used in a patient (e.g. for taking blood, for putting up a drip etc.) can be a risk since it has blood on it.
- If a healthcare worker cuts themselves on blades or other surgical instruments which have been used on a patient, this is also a risk.

Q. What infections can you get from a needlestick injury?

- A. Over 20 different organisms (including bacteria and viruses) have been shown to cause infection. However, the infections we are most concerned with are Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV)

Q. How can we reassure the injured healthcare worker?

- A. We need to take blood from the patient to check for infection. The injured healthcare worker can be fully reassured if the source patient's tests are negative.

Q. Will I be told the results of my blood test?

- A. Your doctor will let you know the results of your blood test. It may take up to 14 days for the written results to be made available. If you have been discharged home in the meantime, you will receive the result at your next clinic appointment.
- If you are anxious about the result and have not received your result before you leave the hospital, please ask your doctor to get the result for you.

Q. If I have an infection and don't know about it, what happens?

- A. You will benefit from having an early diagnosis of your infection. The earlier an infection is detected the earlier treatment can be started.

Q. Can I refuse to have a blood test?

- A. Yes you can refuse to have a blood test. However, it would be better for you and the injured healthcare worker to have the test done.
- If you have any further questions please feel free to ask your doctor.

