

The safe use and disposal of sharps

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This information has been written to help reduce the risk of injury from sharps to all patients, relatives, staff and others.

It applies to all patients and carers attending the James Paget University Hospital renal unit as well as those who are taking part in Shared Care. This includes:

- Those involved in needling themselves or needling others
- Those involved in taking needles out at the end of dialysis
- Those giving injections such as tinzaparin, erythropoietin (Eprex®) and Venofer®.

Everyone using sharps has a responsibility to read this information and make sure they follow the instructions.

What is a sharp?

A sharp is anything that could puncture or graze the skin for example, all needles, scissors, glass items and sharp ends of giving sets attached to any intravenous fluid you may be given.

If you are not sure whether anything should be treated as a sharp, either ask for help from a member of the nursing staff or treat it as a sharp.



Why do we need this information?

As well as the physical effects of a sharps injury, there is also the risk of getting a serious infection caused by viruses carried in the blood for example, hepatitis.

This shows the need for extreme care when using sharps and particularly disposing of them after they have been used.

Following this information reduces the risk of injury and infection by explaining the correct use and disposal of sharps to anyone involved in using them. This includes porters, domestics and waste collectors as well as you, nursing staff, your fellow patients and your relatives.

If you do not understand anything about using and disposing of sharps, please ask a member of the nursing staff.

General advice on using and disposing of sharps

1. If you have used a sharp, you are responsible to make sure it is disposed of in the right way.
2. All sharps must be disposed of straight away in a yellow sharps bin. No other container should be used.
3. The sharps bin should be within easy reach, so you do not have to stretch or carry the sharp to the bin.
4. Remember to find or ask for a bin before you start to do anything that will lead to disposal of a sharp.
5. Used sharps should not be placed anywhere except into a sharps bin. They must not be placed on tables or any other surface.
6. Used needles and syringes should be disposed of as a whole. The needle and syringe must not be separated before being disposed of.
7. Used needles must never be put back in their plastic cover (re-sheathed).

The right way to use a sharps bin

Sharps bins are yellow bins designed and marked for the disposal of sharps. No other type of container should be used.

The pictures below show examples of what sharps bins look like.



Sharps bins will be supplied by the hospital or your local Council.

1. The lid of the bin should be firmly and securely fixed to the base. If the bin does not appear to be correctly put together please call a member of the nursing staff and for the time being use a different bin.
2. The sharps bin has been designed to stop it from being over filled. When the bin is full, the inner black plate will show the word "FULL". If the bin is full, ask a member of staff for a new bin. Make sure the lid is closed and secure on the full bin.



3. Never try to get anything back out of the sharps bin and never try to empty the sharps.
4. After use, the opening in the lid of the bin should be closed but not locked.
5. Do not allow visitors to touch your sharps bin, unless they have been taught how to use it.
6. Staff are responsible for the correct disposal of full sharps bins within the unit.
7. If you cannot find a sharps bin, please ask a member of the nursing staff.

Your haemodialysis nurse will talk to you about this information and show you how a sharps bin works before you sign the sheet attached.

This will give you an opportunity to talk about anything in the information that you do not understand. This Trust has a similar policy which all staff must follow.

Following these policies helps make the Renal Unit and our hospital a safer place for everyone.

When you have talked about this information with your Haemodialysis nurse, and are happy that you have understood all the points, please complete the form, and it will be kept in your Shared Care file.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values	<p>Courtesy and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A welcoming and positive attitude • Polite, friendly and interested in people • Value and respect people as individuals <p>So people feel welcome</p> <p>Attentively kind and helpful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity • Attentive, responsive & take time to help • Visible presence of staff to provide care <p>So people feel cared for</p>	<p>Responsive communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to people & answer their questions • Keep people clearly informed • Involve people <p>So people feel in control</p> <p>Effective and professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring • Effective care / services from joined up teams • Organised and timely, looking to improve <p>So people feel safe</p>
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	<p>The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.</p> <p>For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240</p>
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