

Patient information – infection control department

Sharps injury

If you pierce or puncture your skin with a used medical sharp (this could be a needle, scalpel or glass from broken equipment), follow this first aid advice immediately:

- Encourage the wound to bleed
- Wash the wound using warm running water and soap
- Don't scrub the wound while you're washing it
- Don't suck the wound
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing

You should also seek immediate medical advice within one hour by going to the nearest A&E department. The reason for this is that once someone has used a needle or sharp, viruses in their blood such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV may contaminate it. The risk of infection is low; however you will need to be assessed to rule this out.

Assessing your injury

The healthcare professional treating you will assess the risks to your health and ask about your injury – for example, how and when it happened, or who had used the needle. Samples of your blood may need to be tested for hepatitis B and C or HIV.

If the other person gives their consent, your healthcare professional may also arrange to test samples of the blood on the sharp contaminant.

Healthcare workers must safely dispose of the sharp source.

Will I need any treatment?

If your healthcare professional thinks you're at low risk of infection, you may not need any treatment. If there's a higher risk of infection, you may need:

- Antibiotic treatment, for example if you have cellulitis (infection of the skin)
- A tetanus vaccine
- Vaccination against hepatitis B

- Treatment to prevent HIV

The injury will need to be documented by healthcare staff and a follow-up appointment arranged. A letter informing your GP of the incident, action taken and recommended follow-up will be provided.

Please contact the infection control team on 020 7253 3411 (ext. 2539), who will direct you to services which can provide further support.

This leaflet is adapted from NHS Choices: "What should I do if I injure myself with a used needle?" (2015)

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2557.aspx?CategoryID=72>

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Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

City Road, London EC1V 2PD

Phone: 020 7253 3411

www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday–Friday, 8.30am–9pm

Saturday, 9am-5pm

Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: pals@moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.
