

Problem

Workers at the workplace can be at risk of a needle stick injury as a result of the careless disposal of a syringe or in the handling of sharps in the course of their work.

A needle stick injury is potentially a major health hazard that can also cause considerable stress to the employee and their family. The uncertainty of health outcomes of such an injury and the significant time (approximately six months) required to determine whether the employee's health has been compromised contribute to **stress**.

Where a needle stick Injury has occurred, take immediate action to provide support and perform first aid and medical treatment.

Step 1 Promptly flush the wound under running water.

Step 2 Wash the wound using warm water and liquid soap (except for the eyes, mouth and nose).

Step 3 Thoroughly pat-drying the area.

Step 4 Apply a sterile waterproof dressing (such as an adhesive plaster), as necessary, and applying pressure through the dressing if bleeding is still occurring.

Step 5 Follow the guidance provided and place the syringe in a sealed container.

Step 6 Ensure that the employee is provided with immediate medical advice by a registered health professional.

Step 7 Accompany the employee to the doctor and ensuring the doctor is provided the sealed container with the syringe inside.

Step 8 Offer the employee access to a trauma counselling service.

Step 9 Ensure that confidentiality of the incident and anonymity of the injured person is maintained.

Step 10 If a customer or non-employee has received the needle stick injury, follow Steps 1 through 5 and give the sealed container, with the syringe inside, to the person and encourage them to seek immediate medical advice.

Benefit

Immediate intervention to provide medical treatment and counselling support to the employee will assist the employee in coming to terms with the potentially dangerous and health threatening event.

Furthermore, immediate medical treatment may prevent infection with Hepatitis B and aid in the treatment of HIV.

In the case of a needle stick injury, immediate intervention will also demonstrate to other employees the role they can play in alerting management and other employees to potential exposures when a syringe has been discovered.