

Toolbox Talk / Note – Disposal of Sharps

Local Managers should communicate these key safety messages to their staff at handovers, staff meetings, huddles etc. They are developed in response to events that have occurred or identified hazards.

What are 'sharps'?

'Sharps' are needles, blades (such as scalpels) and other medical instruments that are necessary for carrying out healthcare work and could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin (Health and Safety Executive, 2016).

Examples of Sharps

- Needles
- Cannula
- Scalpels
- Sharps tips of IV sets
- Contaminated slides
- Stitch cutters
- Razors
- Blood stained/contaminated glass
- Needle adapters

What are 'safer' sharps?

A 'safer sharp' or sharps safety device is a medical sharp that is designed and constructed to incorporate a feature or mechanism which prevents or minimises the risk of accidental injury from cutting or pricking the skin (Health Protection Scotland, 2016).



When are we introducing 'safer' sharps?

Safer sharps are already in use within NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde further pieces of equipment will be assessed and introduced as appropriate. E-learning modules are essential for all staff at risk of injury – these available on LearnPro.

How should I use a sharps container?

- Select the appropriate container for the task and environment
- Follow manufacturer's instructions on assembly,
- Complete tracer label on container or affix NHS GGC label adding information as directed
- Position container in suitable area for task
- Use temporary closure when not in use (unless local risk assessment deems otherwise)
- When in use, the sharps container should either be fixed to a bracket or used with a dedicated point of use disposal sharps tray
- When contents reach fill line (do not go past fill line), permanently lock the closure mechanism on the container.
- Once permanently closed, complete label and dispose of according to

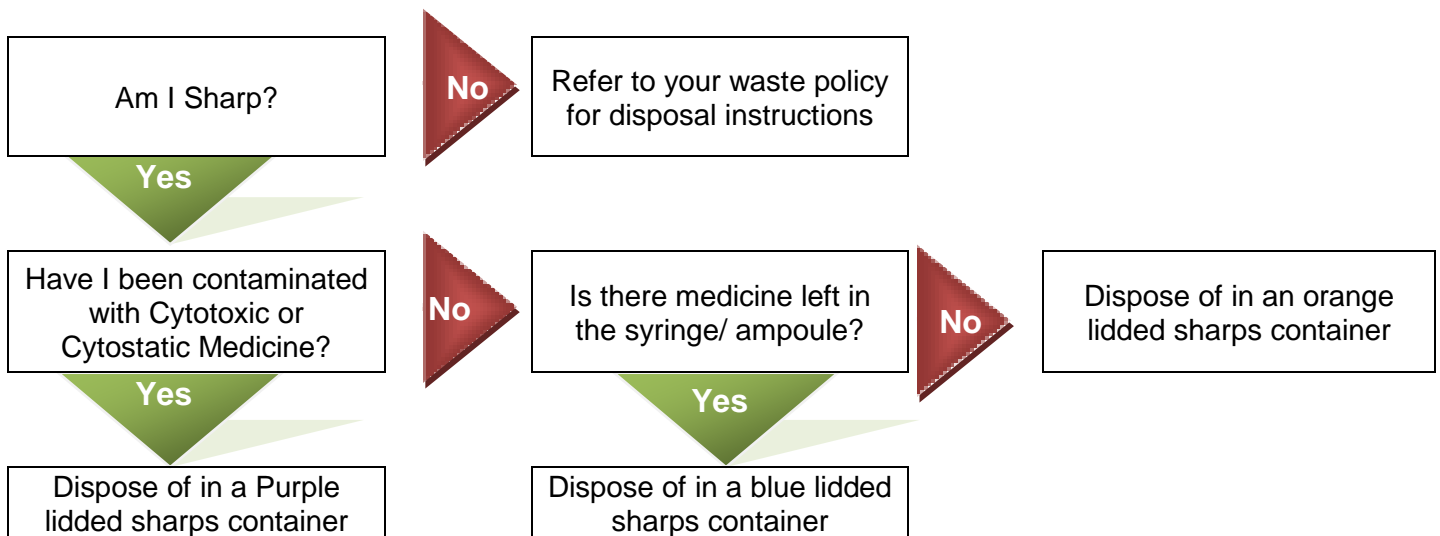
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local waste arrangements.

How sharps are disposed of?

- Sharps must be disposed of at the point of use. The vast majority of clinical areas within NHS GGC use Frontier Medical sharps waste disposal containers, however there are areas which use Healthcare Environmental Sharps Re-usable containers, ensure you familiarise yourself with the equipment available within the Department you are working within.
- Sharps containers are available in different colours of lids these are to identify the various waste streams. It is essential that the correct waste stream is used, please see image below for guidance.



What do I need to remember? - Sharps safety starts with you - it is your responsibility to dispose of sharps safely. All incidents and near misses must be reported on Datix. See the tool box talks on Reporting Incidents and Near Misses.