

what to do if you find a syringe



knowledge is power: what is the risk?

Though there is great public concern about disease resulting from CA-NSIs (community acquired needle stick injuries) **'no HIV infections from such injuries have been documented.'** CDC, 2016

The risk of Hepatitis B and C transmission from a CA-NSI is **"practically negligible."** British Medical Journal 2015

Of the 274 pediatric patients in the 'largest reported cohort monitored for HIV, HBV and HCV seroconversion after a CA-NSI', there were **no detected cases of infection with the blood-borne viruses.** Papenburg, 2008

'When several conditional probabilities are small, the overall probability of the whole chain of events occurring is **very small, sometimes diminishingly so.** This is the case when considering the risk of infection posed by discarded needles in non-healthcare settings.'
UC Berkeley, 2015

By comparison, persons who inject drugs have an increased risk for acquiring these infectious diseases. 'In the United States, approximately 9-12% of new HIV cases, 50% of new hepatitis C cases, and 2% of hepatitis A cases are associated with illicit injection of drugs.'
CDC, 2012

what to do in case of a needlestick

- **Remain calm**
- Wash the needlestick wound with soap & water
- Do not squeeze the wound
- Apply antiseptic and cover with a band-aid
- Seek post-exposure evaluation at a health clinic

CDC, 2003

safe disposal of a syringe:

STAY CALM:

- Bring a sharps (or other) container to the syringe
- Pick up the syringe by the middle of the barrel using tongs or your hands (wear gloves if you have them)
- Place the syringe into the sharps container sharp end first
- Secure the lid of the sharps container
- Wash your hands

PRO TIPS:

- make sure that you can clearly see and reach the needle
- ensure others who are nearby are aware of the needle
- bring the container to the needle, not the other way around

DO NOT:

- force needles or sharps into container
- put fingers inside the container
- bend, break, recap or remove the needle
- leave the needle unattended. If you must leave to get disposal supplies, ask another person to keep watch to avoid an accidental stick

CDC, 2008
FDA, 2014

if you are not able to use other methods of disposal:

A last resort is to dispose of the used syringes/sharps in a heavy duty plastic bottle such as a laundry detergent bottle and tape the lid shut. (Do not use coffee cans- they are not puncture resistant). On the outside of the bottle, where it can be easily seen, write "WARNING: SYRINGES - DO NOT RECYCLE" on the outside and then place in the household trash.

- Indiana State Department of Health

where can i get a sharps container?

- Indiana Recovery Alliance
- the local solid waste department
- a local pharmacy
- a medical supply company

where can i take syringes i find?

- Indiana Recovery Alliance (kiosk in front of building)
- Solid waste department (must be in FDA container)
- Shalom Center (kiosk off the side of the dining room)
- In a pinch, follow instructions above in "Other Methods of Disposal"

why is this happening? what can i do?

The number one reason reported for improper disposal is the fear of a felony arrest. By supporting policies and laws that reduce this fear (ie decriminalization of unlawful syringe possession) as well as programs that provide a safe place to dispose of syringes such as syringe service programs, you are supporting a framework that encourages safe disposal.

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Sharps injuries in the community - same same but different