

## 12. Safe Handling of Sharps

Safe handling of sharps reduces the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

Equipment that is capable of breaking the skin should be purchased incorporating a safety engineered design where possible. This safety engineered equipment is designed with mechanisms to reduce the risk of the user being injured during its use.

Approved sharps disposal containers must be readily available and accessible in all point-of-use areas. Safe placement of the sharps container is important in all health care settings.

Choose containers that are designed to make one handed disposal possible and easy. Dispose of sharps immediately after use in a clearly labeled, sharps disposal container. The person using the sharp instrument or device is responsible for its safe disposal.

Fill containers only to  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, close the lid securely for disposal. Replace the used container with a new empty one.

The container should have a tightly fitting lid that seals and prevents leakage. This reduces risk to you, other health care providers, patients and others in the environment (e.g. waste disposal handlers).

Used sharps are considered biomedical waste. Dispose of used sharps containers in accordance with regulations from municipal and territorial authorities. The Community Health Centre may receive sharps containers from community members who have needles to dispose of at home (e.g. diabetics, and palliative care clients).

### Needles and Syringes:

Follow Routine Practices, wear gloves:

- Do not remove needles from syringes or other devices; always dispose of them as a single unit.
- Do not recap needles prior to disposal. Most needle stick injuries occur during recapping.
- Do not bend or break needles after use.
- Discard needles and syringes directly into a sharps container immediately after use.
- Do not leave a sharp protruding from the sharps container.



