

# LEAFLET FOR INJECTION PROVIDERS

## "Needle-stick injury: It could happen to you"

### ***Description:***

This leaflet, aimed at injection providers, personalizes the risk of needle-stick injury. In many countries nurses will be the primary audience. The content is an appropriate combination of facts, statistics and practical information for achieving safe practices. In addition, powerful and moving personal testimonies contribute to the process of personalization of the risk. A combination of images may be used, including photographs, illustrations and cartoons. A variety of lay-out and format options are possible but a bright engaging full colour design is advised if resources permit.

### ***Sample text***

#### Main title:

Needle-stick injury – it could happen to you!

#### Text:

#### *Fact*

Needle-stick injuries expose you to a number of bloodborne pathogens that can cause serious or even fatal infections. The most serious health risks are:

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) – the virus that causes AIDS

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all healthcare workers. HBV vaccine has proved highly effective in preventing infection in workers exposed to HBV. However, no vaccine exists to prevent HCV or HIV infection. Preventing needle-stick injuries is the best way to protect yourself from these deadly infections!

#### *Fact*

What is the risk of my getting infected if I get stuck with a needle used on an infected patient?

The figures are easy to remember: It is the rule of the “3”s.

- For hepatitis B, the risk is approximately 30%.
- For hepatitis C, the risk is approximately 3%.
- For HIV, the risk is approximately 0.3%.

#### *Fact*

Who is at risk of needle-stick injury?

- Any worker who may come into contact with needles is at risk, including nursing staff, lab workers, doctors, housekeeping staff and sanitation workers.

### *Fact*

How common are needle-stick injuries?

- In our country, research shows that as many as x% of healthcare providers report that they had suffered a needle-stick injury in the past 12 months. The annual rate of needle-stick injuries per provider is x. However, at least one provider admitted to having as many as x such accidents last year! (Regional data on the rates of needle-stick injuries may be found in the WHO World Health Report 2002)

### *Fact*

What kinds of needles usually cause needle-stick injuries?

- Hypodermic needles
- Blood collection needles
- Suture needles
- Needles used in intravenous delivery systems

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## **DANGER!**

### *Fact*

What is the most common way to get a needle-stick injury?

Needle-stick injuries are most often associated with the following activities:

- Recapping needles
  - Transferring a body fluid between containers
  - Failing to dispose of used needles properly in a puncture-proof safety box
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### *How can I protect myself?*

- Avoid the use of needles whenever possible. For example, avoid giving injections where an equivalent oral medication is available. It's much safer for you and it's also much safer for your patient.
- Avoid recapping needles. Instead immediately place them uncapped into a safety box.
- Think ahead and plan the safe handling and disposal of needles before using them. For example make sure there is a safety box available in the immediate area where you give injections.
- Never fill a safety box more than three-quarters full. If you need to transport it to another room or to a disposal site, carry it very carefully, if possible holding it at the top, above the level of the needles.
- Don't open or empty the safety box. It should be stored in a safe and secure place until it is ready for burning.
- Protect yourself with hepatitis B vaccination

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Remember you have a responsibility to protect not only your own children, but your friends' and neighbours' children too.

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### *How can I protect others?*

- Ensure that all staff in your area is warned of the risks and given appropriate training. This is especially important for housekeeping staff or sanitation workers who do not have specialist medical training.

- If you observe such dangers, gently point them out to your colleagues. If you take time to explain the risks they will greatly appreciate your concern.
- Ensure waste is disposed of properly within the facility. It is your responsibility to ensure that no infected waste reaches the community, where items such as needles and syringes are especially attractive to young children.

**Needle-stick injuries:  
The best person to prevent them is you!**

Suggested special boxes

- Case histories with photographs: "It happened to me"

Suggested illustrations

- Illustrated good and bad practices with pictures from the image bank
- Pictogrammes from the best practices series
- The steps to making a safety box when no proper box is available
- Illustration to explain the “burning and burying” technique

**Sample design**

