How to Protect Yourself From Needlestick Injuries

What Every Worker Should Know
Do certain work practices increase the risk of needlestick injury?
Yes. Past studies have shown that needlestick injuries are often associated with these activities:
- Recapping needles
- Transferring a body fluid between containers
- Failing to dispose of used needles properly in puncture-resistant sharps containers

How can I protect myself from needlestick injuries?
- Avoid the use of needles where safe and effective alternatives are available.
- Help your employer select and evaluate devices with safety features that reduce the risk of needlestick injury.
- Use devices with safety features provided by your employer.
- Avoid recapping needles.
- Plan for safe handling and disposal of needles before using them.
- Promptly dispose of used needles in appropriate sharps disposal containers.
- Report all needlestick and sharps-related injuries promptly to ensure that you receive appropriate followup care.
- Tell your employer about any needlestick hazards you observe.
- Participate in training related to infection prevention.
- Get a hepatitis B vaccination.

For additional information, see NIOSH Alert: Preventing Needlestick Injuries in Health Care Settings [DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2000-108]. Single copies of the Alert are available from the following:

NIOSH-Publications Dissemination
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45226-1998

1-800-35-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674)
Fax: 513-533-8573
E-mail: pubstaff@cdc.gov
Web site: www.cdc.gov/niosh

Needlestick injuries can lead to serious or fatal infections. Health care workers who use or may be exposed to needles are at increased risk of needlestick injury. All workers who are at risk should take steps to protect themselves from this significant health hazard.