Management of Sharps & Safe Injection Practices

What are ‘sharps’?
Sharps are defined as any needles, scalpels, or other articles that could cause wounds or punctures to personnel handling them (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition. © 2009, Elsevier)

Examples of Sharps
- Needles
- Syringes
- Scalpels
- Sharps tips of IV sets
- Contaminated slides
- Stitch cutters
- Guide wires
- Razors
- Blood stained/contaminated glass

How sharps are disposed of
Sharps must be disposed of appropriately to prevent needle stick injury. There are two types of sharps disposal bins:

Yellow Sharps Bin with red/blue Lid
Dispose needles, syringes, scalpels, tips of syringes, sharp instruments etc.. IV sets, Contaminated slides, stitch cutters, guide wires, razors, blood stained/contaminated glass

Yellow Sharps Bin with Purple Lid
Dispose needles, syringes, sharp instruments etc... that have been used for the administration of cytotoxic waste

Management of sharp bins
- Store away from service users/visitors
- Wall mount – do not leave open boxes on desks/floors etc.
- Close when 2/3 full
- All sharps bins must be tagged
- Never re-cap needles
- Never pass a used needle from one person to another
- Never overfill sharps bins
Safe Injection Practices

• A sterile, single use disposable needle and syringe should be used for each injection

• Ensure strict hand hygiene is performed both before and after preparation and administration

• An aseptic technique should be used to prevent contamination of sterile equipment and medications

• The needle and syringe should be discarded intact into an approved sharps container after use

• Single use vials should be used in preference to multi dose vials where possible

• Alcohol swabs and cotton wool swabs are single use and should be discarded after use.

Remember!

• Never re-cap needles
• Never pass a used needle from one person to another
• Never overfill sharps bins