

Preventing Accidental Injury and the Spread of Blood-Borne Diseases

What are blood-borne diseases?

HIV, Hepatitis B and C are diseases that are carried in the blood. These diseases aren't spread through everyday contact. They can be spread through unprotected sex, from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby and through blood and blood products.



If needles are shared, individuals are exposed to the blood of another person. If a person is infected with hepatitis B or C or HIV, there's a risk of the disease being spread.



Are discarded needles a problem in Northwestern Ontario?

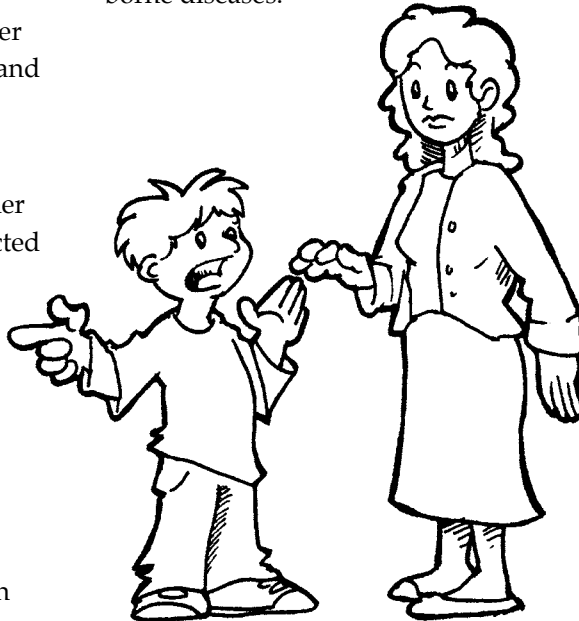
Occasionally, needles are found in places where children play such as parks and schoolyards.

When this happens, it's important that the needle is safely collected and disposed of by an adult.



What's the risk of disease from a needlestick injury?

The risk of becoming infected after being stuck by a needle is very low. The risk is further reduced because only a small percentage of our population is infected with blood-borne diseases.



What is the correct way to collect and dispose of a used needle?

- Pick the needle up carefully – don't touch it with your bare hands. If you have gloves, wear them, or use a heavy cloth. If tongs are available, use them to pick up the needle.
- Hold the needle tip away from you. Be careful not to prick yourself.
- Place the needle with the tip downward in a can or plastic container with a lid. Seal securely.
- Call or bring the container to the health unit. Or, take the container to the police, hospital, emergency department, or a hazardous waste disposal site near you.

How can I help children understand what to do if they find a needle?

Teach children these simple rules:

- If you find a needle don't touch it!
- Tell an adult where you found the needle.
- If you are hurt by a needle, tell an adult. You will need to see a doctor right away.



For more information, call:
(807) 622-8235 or visit www.norwestchc.org

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