



EHS Fact Sheet

Sharps Safety

Why is recapping needles dangerous?

It is extremely dangerous to hold a needle in one hand and attempt to cover it with a small cap held in the other hand because the following may happen:

- ♦ The needle could miss the cap and stab the hand holding it.
- ♦ The needle could pierce the cap and stab the hand holding it.
- ♦ The poorly fitting cap could slip off a recapped needle and stab the hand holding it.



How to protect yourself from needle-stick injuries:

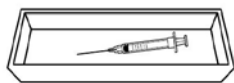
- ♦ Avoid the use of needles if safe and effective alternatives are available.
- ♦ Select, evaluate and use devices with safety features that reduce the risk of needlestick injury
- ♦ Avoid recapping of needles.
- ♦ Plan for safe handling and disposal of needles before using them.
- ♦ Put uncapped needles in a rigid tray during procedures.
- ♦ Promptly dispose of used needles in appropriate sharps containers.
- ♦ Report all needlestick and sharps-related injuries promptly to ensure that you receive appropriate follow up care.
- ♦ Substitute plasticware for glass when possible.
- ♦ Follow safety guidelines for all sharp hazards (razor blades, scalpels, slides.)
- ♦ Participate in training.



Recapping device



One-hand scoop



Rigid tray

Avoid Recapping

Do not recap needles for disposal. If recapping is required for the procedure being done, you must use tongs, a recapping device or one-hand scoop method to recap the needle. Never recap needles using one hand to hold the cap and the other to hold the needle!

Needle Disposal

Always dispose of needles and other sharps in a rigid, puncture-resistant container immediately after use. Needles used with infectious material must be disposed of in a biohazard sharps container. Once the sharps container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, dispose of in a biohazard box lined with a red bag liner. Non-infectious needles and other sharps may be disposed of in any appropriate puncture-resistant container, which when full should be discarded via the solid waste stream.

