Occupational Health Service
based at the RUH Bath NHS Trust
Sharps & Contamination incident reporting procedure

Procedure to be followed by staff following all sharps and contamination incidents. These are classified as incidents where you are exposed to blood, serum or other body fluid contaminated with blood. Incidents include:

- Percutaneous injuries such as needlestick injuries or sharps injuries. Bites (blood drawn)
- Scratches (blood drawn)
- Contamination of the mucous membrane (through the mouth & nose), or conjunctivae (through the eye)
- Minor cuts, abrasions and other open skin lesions which become contaminated.

Action to be taken following an incident:-

1. Wash the site of exposure / injury liberally with soap and warm water but without scrubbing. Exposed mucous membranes or conjunctivae should be irrigated copiously with water. If there is a puncture wound free bleeding should be encouraged but the wound should not be sucked.

2. Following a sharps or contamination incident the patient’s consent for testing must be obtained. If the patient is unconscious wait until they have regained full consciousness. It is illegal to test patients without consent in these circumstances and relatives cannot provide consent on their behalf. If appropriate, the injured person can take prophylactic treatment until consent has been obtained and the test result is known.

3. Bleed the source patient (if known) for Hepatitis B & C and HIV as soon as possible (clotted yellow-topped bottle). The source patient should be provided with appropriate information about the implications of these tests and given appropriate time to consider and discuss them.

   A virology request form should be sent with the sample.

4. Bleed the staff member involved in the incident for a 1st storage sample (clotted yellow-topped bottle). Complete a virology request form.
Reporting Procedure

All incidents must be reported by telephone to the Occupational Health Department as soon as possible.

- Call the RUH Occupational Health Department needlestick hotline Ext. 1001, externally 01225 821001 as soon as possible. The number is manned from 8.00 – 17.00, Monday to Friday,

- At all other times including bank holidays, the Occupational Health Department needlestick hotline provides an answerphone message giving instruction and advice and allows you to leave a message reporting the incident, which will ensure that the necessary follow up procedures are implemented.

- Complete a staff accident / incident report form and forward to the appropriate Department (RUH staff to send forms to Risk Management).

Responsibility for reporting

The responsibility for compliance with these instructions lies with the injured employee and his/her immediate manager.

_The fact that the injured employee has been vaccinated against Hepatitis B does not preclude the need to bleed both the injured member of staff and the source patient or the necessity to follow the correct reporting procedure._

Further advice

If you need further advice out of hours for circumstances such as:

- Assessment has identified a high risk of a communicable disease
- Consent for testing cannot be obtained (patient refuses / unconscious etc.) the on-call virologist can be contacted (via switchboard - externally 01225 423881) for advice.

HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV PEP)

If there is a concern about exposure to HIV during working hours telephone the needlestick hotline. Out of hours contact the RUH switchboard and ask for the doctor on call for HIV PEP.