

Patient information – infection control department

Sharps injury

If you pierce or puncture your skin with a used medical sharp (this could be a needle, scalpel or glass from broken equipment), follow this first aid advice immediately:

- Wash the wound using running water
- Don't scrub the wound while you're washing it
- Don't suck the wound
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing

You should also seek medical advice within one hour by going to the nearest A&E department. The reason for this is that once someone has used a needle or sharp, viruses in their blood such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV may contaminate it.

Assessing your injury

The healthcare professional treating you will assess the risks to your health and ask about your injury – for example, how and when it happened, or who had used the needle. Samples of your blood may

need to be tested for hepatitis B and C or HIV.


Your healthcare professional may also arrange to test samples of the other person's blood if they give their consent. If the injury is from a sharp from an unknown source and the sharp is available, staff will keep it and send it off for testing.

Will I need any treatment?

If your healthcare professional thinks you're at low risk of infection, you may not need any treatment. If there's a higher risk of infection, you may need:

- Antibiotic treatment, for example if you have cellulitis (infection of the skin)
- Vaccination against hepatitis B
- Treatment to prevent HIV

Please contact the infection control team on 020 7253 3411 ext. 2539 who will direct you to services which can provide further support.



This leaflet is adapted from NHS Choices:
“What should I do if I injure myself with a
used needle?”

[http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2557.aspx?
CategoryID=72](http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2557.aspx?CategoryID=72)

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**Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS
Foundation Trust**
City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday–Friday, 9am–9pm

Information and advice on eye conditions
and treatments from experienced
ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: pals@moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields’ PALS team provides
confidential advice and support to help
you with any concerns you may have
about the care we provide, guiding you

through the different services available at
Moorfields. The PALS team can also
advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients
have the right to begin consultant-led
treatment within 18 weeks of being
referred by their GP. Moorfields is
committed to fulfilling this right, but if you
feel that we have failed to do so, please
contact our patient advice and liaison
service (PALS) who will be able to advise
you further (see above). For more
information about your rights under the
NHS constitution, visit
www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.

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