Body Art: Proper Handling of Sharps

Safe disposal of sharps limits the risk of infection and prevents others from accidentally hurting themselves.

Do:
- Take your time handling all sharps
- Place all sharps in sharps container near artist’s work area immediately after use
- Ensure the disposal container is made for handling sharps that meet NIOSH standards
- Replace the sharps container when full
- Use disposal services that are authorized to handle biomedical waste
- Get your Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccination

Don’t:
- Do not put fingers in sharps container
- Do not remove, bend or break, or recap needle or sharp
- Do not reuse sharps container
- Do not use two hands to handle sharps, if possible
- Do not practice “freehand” piercing techniques

Sharps injury: What do you do?

1. Provide immediate care to the exposure site
   - Punctures to skin: Wash with soap and water for 15 minutes. Apply direct pressure to control bleeding
   - Mouth: Rinse several times with water
   - Eyes: Remove contact lenses. Flush with saline or water for 15 minutes or as tolerated

2. Seek medical attention to determine risk associated with exposure

3. Record Keeping
   a. Keep a Sharps Incident Log that includes:
      i. Date of the injury
      ii. Type and brand of the device involved
      iii. Department or work area where the incident occurred
      iv. Explanation of how the incident occurred
   b. Refer to the body art facility’s Exposure Control Plan for jurisdiction-specific requirements