

CONTAMINATED SHARPS INJURY @ THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The School of Medicine has a post-contaminated sharps injury procedure which must be followed in the event of staff, visitors or students sustaining a contaminated sharps injury (please refer to the procedure detailed below). The procedure incorporates a risk assessment of the injury to ensure that the exposed person is suitably treated, counselled and tested to minimise the effect of the potential exposure to contaminated products.

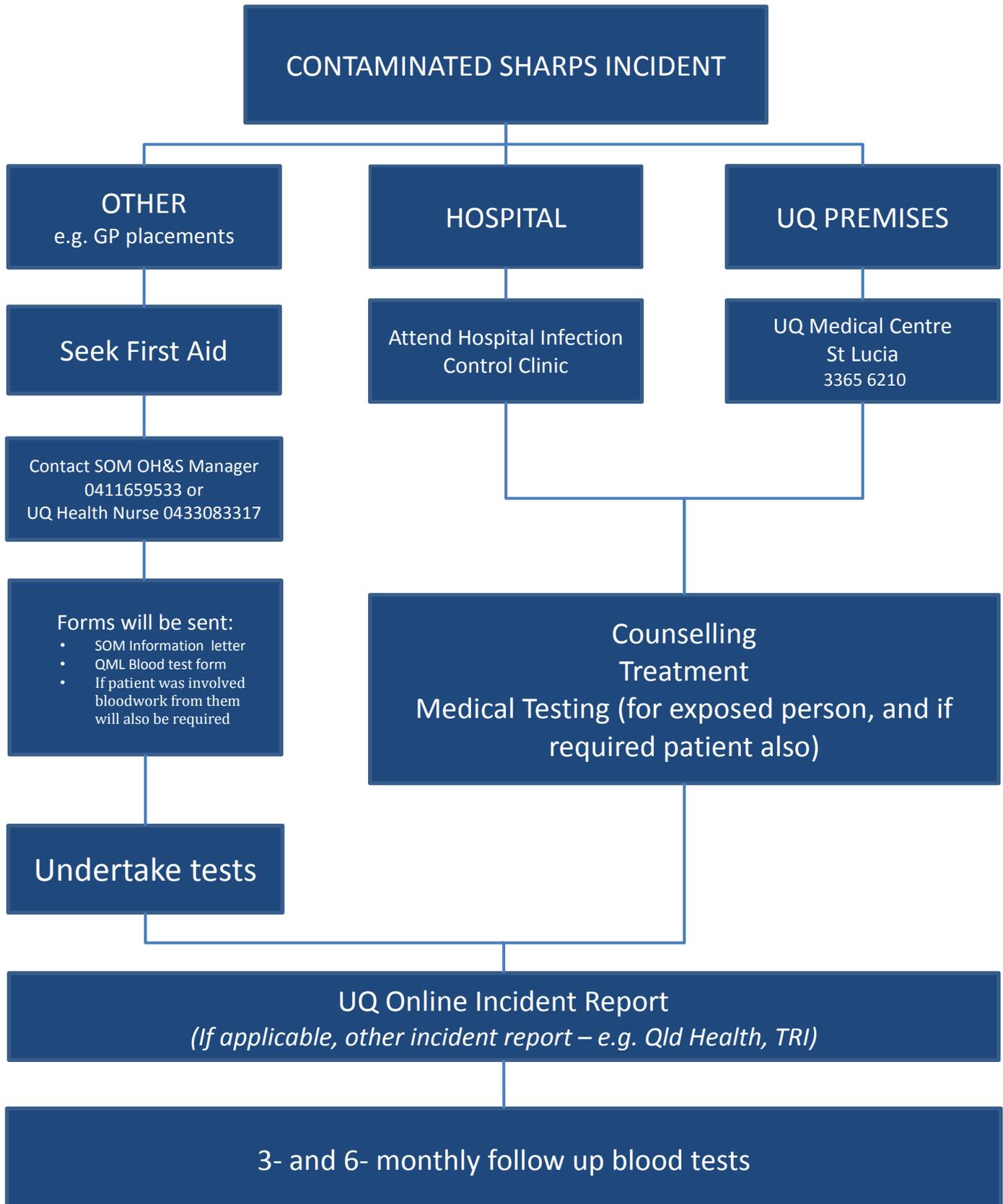
- A **sharps** injury is denoted as any piercing, such as the skin
- A **contaminated sharps** injury is one where there is the potential for a person to be exposed to an infectious or hazardous agent, such as blood, body fluids, cell lines or even animal allergens. This could be via a needle, bite or instrument

Generally, the risk of transmissible pathogen infection from a contaminated sharps injury is low and the exposed person does not need to be overly concerned. For example, the chance of infection from after a sharps injury with a known HIV-infected blood samples is less than 0.3% depending on viral load, and that of exposure via mucous membrane to HIV-infected blood is ~ 0.09%.

Baseline testing of blood is necessary to determine the physiological status of the exposed person. It is therefore critical that blood samples are taken as soon as possible after the sharps injury occurs. A blood sample should also be taken from the source patient (and consent) should there is the potential for contamination from a patient. Blood testing schedules are decided by a medical practitioner taking into account initial risk factors associated with the nature of the injury, health status and lifestyle factors of the persons involved or/and baseline blood test results and/or current Queensland Health contaminated sharps injury guideline advice.

[For more details, please refer to UQ Guideline Procedures for working with Blood and Body Fluids <http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/HEALTH-bloodguideline.pdf>; Guideline Management of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids, Queensland Government Department of Health, Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention & Tuberculosis Control, April 2013; <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qhpolicy/docs/gdl/qh-gdl-321-8.pdf>; and the Queensland Health CHRISP website: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/chrisp/>]

POST-CONTAMINATED SHARPS INCIDENT PROCEDURE



PROCEDURE:

1. First and foremost, remove the contaminated item from the work area to ensure that there are no further incidents
2. Seek and administer first aid (If within a hospital setting, you may wish to visit the Emergency department for treatment. They will refer you to their Infection Control Clinic)
3. Treatment: please refer to *Guideline Management of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids, Queensland Government Department of Health, Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention & Tuberculosis Control, April 2013*; <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qhpolicy/docs/gdl/gh-gdl-321-8.pdf>
 - Immediately following exposure to blood or body fluids, it is recommended that the exposed person undertakes the following steps as soon as possible:
 - Do not squeeze or rub the injury site
 - The exposed person shall inform an appropriate person as soon as possible after exposure so assessment and follow-up can be undertaken
 - Wash wounds and skin sites that have been in contact with blood or body fluids with soap and water
 - Apply a sterile dressing as necessary, and apply pressure through the dressing if bleeding is still occurring if blood gets on the skin, irrespective of whether there are cuts or abrasions, wash well with soap and water
 - Irrigate mucous membranes with water or normal saline
 - If eyes are contaminated, rinse while they are open, gently but thoroughly (for at least 30 seconds) with water or normal saline
 - If contact lenses are worn, leave these in place while irrigating the eye, as they form a barrier over the eye and will help protect it. Once the eye has been cleaned, remove the contact lenses and clean them in the normal manner. This will make them safe to wear again
 - If blood or body fluids get in the mouth, spit them out and then rinse the mouth with water several times
 - If clothing is contaminated, remove clothing and shower if necessary
 - When water is not available, use of non-water cleanser or antiseptic shall replace the use of soap and water for washing cuts or punctures of the skin or intact skin
 - The application of strong solutions (for example, bleach or iodine) to wounds or skin sites is not recommended
4. Testing:

The School requests that all parties involved in the incident have blood tests as soon as possible following a sharps injury from a contaminated object or exposure. Depending upon the premises you are in at the time of the injury, the process will differ:

 - a) If you are within a Brisbane-based UQ premises, you need to make an appointment at the St Lucia medical centre with Dr Tony Arklay. He will organise the appropriate test and treatment. Blood test results and information in regard to follow up and counselling will be provided by Dr Arklay at the consultation.
 - b) If you are based at a hospital, please seek out the relevant hospital Infection Control Clinic. They will provide you with counselling, treatment and organise blood tests
 - c) If you are not based at either a hospital, such as a student on GP placement, please contact the School OH&S Manager or UQ's Occupational Health Nurse (see details in table below) who will provide you with QML blood test request paperwork to get your blood work done.
 - Forms required: UQ Health Services (UQHS) registration form, a Queensland Medical Laboratory (QML) blood test form signed by Dr Tony Arklay and a pre-paid envelope
 - The completed UQHS registration forms should be scanned and emailed to Fiona Coulthard, at UQHS, St Lucia on the day of the incident (in the OHNA's absence please email the UHS-healthservice@uq.edu.au)

If you wish to, visit a doctor of your choice they may order these tests for you; however, be aware they may not bulk bill you and hence you will be responsible for the gap amount (this amount cannot be reimbursed through UQ Insurance)

Please Note: Student QML expenses will be covered by bulk-billing Medicare, while international students will receive a rebate from their Overseas Student Health Cover. Staff invoices for blood testing will be also being bulk billed through the UQ Medical Centre.
5. You will be contacted at the 3- and 6- monthly post-incident window for follow up blood tests
6. If the source contamination is another person (e.g. a patient), they will also need to be referred for testing to adequately assess the risk to the exposed person. The person should be provided with UQ Health Services

(UQHS) registration form, a Queensland Medical Laboratory (QML) blood test form signed by Dr Tony Arklay and a pre-paid envelope.

In the event of a source patient leaving the clinic without completing a UQHS registration form or receiving a blood test form, they need to be contacted by telephone and informed of the situation. A cover letter, UHS registration form, blood test form and a pre-paid return envelope should be mailed to the patient to complete. The pre-paid envelope will be addressed to the UQ University Health service at the St Lucia campus. The OHNA must be notified by email or phone of the patient's details. This notification will ensure that Dr Tony Arklay is informed there will be blood results arriving for those persons identified by the UHS registration forms.

7. Please remember to lodge an incident report via UQ's online incident reporting database (https://injury.admin.uq.edu.au/forms/default_content.asp) as well as the Queensland Health CHRISP reporting database.
8. If the exposed person, on baseline testing, is found to be infected and is not already in the care of an appropriate medical specialist, they shall be referred to such a specialist
9. If the likelihood of infection is high, the exposed person will be provided with relevant antiretroviral therapy or Immunoglobulin treatment
- 10. Note: Confidentiality will be maintained at all times**

The Sharps/Needlestick Injury Hotline for Queensland Health hospitals → 07 - 3646 1482

For your information, Infectious control clinics and other critical contact numbers are as follows:

OH&S Manager	Harmony Rose	ohs@som.uq.edu.au	3443 8045 / 0411 659 533
UQ Occupational Health Nurse Advisor	Fiona Coulthard	f.coulthard@uq.edu.au	33654883 / 0433083317
Infection Control Clinics	Brisbane	Princess Alexandra Hospital	3176 5881
		Mater Health Services	3163 8111
		Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital	3646 8761
		The Prince Charles Hospital	3139 4000
	Ipswich	Ipswich Hospital	3810 1111
	Caboolture	Caboolture Hospital	(07) 5433 8888
	Gold coast	Gold Coast Hospital	(07) 5519 8211
	Toowoomba	Toowoomba Hospital	(07) 4616 6000
	Nambour	Nambour General Hospital	(07) 5470 6600
	Townsville	Townsville Hospital	07 4433 1111
	Cairns	Cairns Base Hospital	(07) 4226 0000
	Bundaberg	Bundaberg Hospital	(07) 4150 2222
	Alice Springs	Alice Springs Hospital	(08) 8951 7777