Action to be taken following a needlestick/sharps injury, human bite/scratch or splash of body fluid to the eyes or mouth

Information below is from the Health and Safety Executive and the actions have been informed by Oxford University Hospitals Occupational Health department.
You can also find more information on the NHS website HERE

What are sharps?

'Sharps' are needles, blades (such as scalpels) and other medical instruments that are necessary for carrying out healthcare work and could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin.

What is a sharps injury?

A sharps injury is an incident, which causes a needle, blade (such as scalpel) or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin. This is sometimes called a percutaneous injury.

What is the risk?

The main risk from a sharps injury is the potential exposure to infections such as blood-borne viruses (BBV). This can occur where the injury involves a sharp that is contaminated with blood or a bodily fluid from a patient. The blood-borne viruses of most concern are:
Hepatitis B (HBV)
Hepatitis C (HCV)
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
The transmission of infection depends on a number of factors, including the person's natural immune system. We know the number of injuries each year is high, but only a small number are known to have caused infections that led to serious illness. However, the effects of the injury and anxiety about its potential consequences, including the adverse side effects of post-exposure prophylaxis can have a significant personal impact on an injured employee.

Who is at risk?

Workers and others in health and social care are at risk. This includes those who directly handle sharps but also includes workers who may inadvertently be put at risk when sharps are not stored or disposed of correctly. There is a higher risk of infection from a sharps injury involving hollow-bore needles. Higher risk procedures include intra-vascular cannulation,

venepuncture and injections and use of IV cannulae, winged steel-butterfly-needles, needles and syringes and phlebotomy needles**.**

ACTIONS

Step 1: First Aid

Encourage the wound to gently bleed, ideally holding it under running water
Wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap
Don't scrub the wound while you are washing it
Don't suck the wound
Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing

If body fluids splash into mouth do not swallow, rinse out
mouth several times with cold water.

If body fluids splash into eyes, irrigate well with running water.

Step 2: Immediately Report Incident and Seek Help

Report the incident to the senior person on duty on your area and seek advice

Step 3: Assess Infection Risk

a) Unused/clean sharp – No risk of infection.

- Contact First Aider for advice if needed.
- You do not usually need to contact Occupational health in this circumstance

b) Used sharp - risk of infection two different pathways

Pathway 1) Action if you are NOT on placement at an Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust site

(NB: this will be a different organisation to student occupational health)

Immediate:

If you are on a health care site, you need to follow the placement areas policy and use their needlestick services. If this is not available go to Accident and Emergency. Here they will risk assess the situation and ask you about your own immunity status (Hep B) and consider any treatment you may require

Longer term:

Call the Centre for Occupational Health and Wellbeing as soon as possible for follow up treatment and advice.

Monday to Friday 8am-4pm: Bleep 1474 via switch board 0300 304 7777

In addition:

- Contact First Aider for advice if needed.

Pathway 2) Action if you are ON placement at an Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust site

(NB: this is the same organisation as student occupational health)

- Call the Centre for Occupational Health and Wellbeing immediately for follow up treatment and advice.
  Monday to Friday 8am-4pm: Bleep 1474 via switch board 0300 304 7777
  If outside these hours, please call the Microbiology registrar
  Monday to Friday 4pm -5pm: 20875 (Bleep 4077) or bleep via switch board 0300 304 7777
  After 5pm/bank holidays/weekends: via JRH Switchboard

  In addition:
- Contact First Aider for advice if needed.

Step 4: Complete Reporting Process and Support

- Complete the placement areas incident reporting process (e.g. Datix)

Contact the University to inform your link lecturer/academic advisor and seek support as required