

Tip of the Month



Respect the Needle!

You have been drawing blood without a needlestick for a long time; your technique has been perfected. You are so comfortable with the procedure that you could do it without even thinking about it; then one day you will. You won't be able to sleep at night, wondering if there's a virus inside you that you can't stop.

It will immediately send chills down your spine. It will change your life, perhaps forever. It will plunge you into an abysmal depression, thick with uncertainty, doubt, despair and a gut-wrenching anxiety that consumes every shred of hope for months on end. You will think you'll never be able to smile again without forcing it.

Nobody who knows you will look at you the same way. Not your friends, not your family, not your spouse. Although some will come closer to comfort you, some will distance themselves from you in ways that will make you feel like a leper who ought not to be touched.

All this because you think needlesticks were something that happened to other people. All this because you don't respect the needle.

Healthcare workers who respect the needle will never know what this feeling is like. They know the needle is deadly; they won't even recap an unused one just because they know that if they do, they might allow themselves to do it with a dirty one someday.

Healthcare workers who respect the needle know that every hour of every day, sixteen *other* healthcare workers get stuck with contaminated needles, but not them. At the day's end, over 400 *other* healthcare workers will lose sleep, but not them.

Healthcare workers who respect the needle carry sharps containers to the bedside. They may talk as if they are drawing blood absent-mindedly, but their focus is intense and unwavering until the needle is gone for good. They use gloves *every time*. When drawing with a syringe, they always use a safety transfer device; and they sleep soundly at night.

Isn't it time for you to respect the needle?!