



## Stop Sticks to Stop Sharps Injuries

Needlestick injuries are a major injury and health hazard for health care workers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there are about 385,000 sharps-related injuries every year in the United States among health care workers in hospitals. Most reported sharps injuries involve nursing staff; however, laboratory staff, housekeepers, physicians and other health care workers are also injured.

Accidental punctures by contaminated needles can inject hazardous fluids, including blood, into the body and transmit infectious diseases, especially bloodborne viruses such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Even small amounts of infectious fluid can spread certain diseases.

To raise awareness among health care workers about their risk of workplace exposure to bloodborne pathogens, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) developed its STOP STICKS campaign. The campaign is intended to help prepare and motivate health care workers to protect themselves from sharps injuries and to provide organizations with tools and strategies for establishing safety culture in a sharps injury prevention program.

The STOP STICKS campaign's website provides guidance and resources such as posters, videos, and newsletter articles to help organizations tailor the campaign to meet their specific needs and raise awareness of this important health issue. NIOSH reports that the campaign has had a positive impact on the knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes of health care workers - all of which is intended to ultimately reduce injuries and keep workers safe.

### Sources:

<http://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/2011/08/ezine.html?id=28453&link=8#partners>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stopsticks/> - NIOSH "Stop Sticks" Campaign

[http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/needlestick\\_injuries.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/needlestick_injuries.html) - CCOHS Needle Stick Facts



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