

What you should do if you find a needle

Don't Panic. While it may be concerning, when properly handled the risk of getting poked, scratched or cut by a needle is very low. The risk of getting an infection from an improperly discarded needle in a community setting is also extremely low.

Step 1. Find a rigid plastic container with a secure lid (e.g. plastic drink bottle with a wide mouth, liquid laundry bottle). Remove the lid and place the container on the ground beside the needle. Do not break or recap the needle.

Step 2. Pick up the needle by the centre of the syringe barrel with care. Use work or latex gloves, or tongs, if available. Always point the sharp end of the needle down and away from you.

Step 3. Put the needle in the container, sharp-end first, and secure the lid. While doing this step, the container should be on the ground; do not hold it in your hand. Remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Step 4. Drop off the sealed container at a local health unit, pharmacy or community drop box.



If you or someone else has been poked, scratched, or cut by a needle:

Do not panic. Always remember, the risk of infection is very low. Wash the affected area immediately with soap and warm water, do not squeeze.

Go to your nearest emergency room for medical attention.