



The Norman Knight Nursing Center  
for Clinical & Professional Development

## PCAs Quick Reference: Blood & Body Fluid Prevention: Splash & Sharps Safety

What is a blood and/or body fluid splash? PCAs are at risk of exposure to blood and body fluids from splashes to the eyes, mouth or non-intact skin. Some activities that PCAs are involved in that may potentially result in splashes include:

- oral suctioning
- spitting
- performing phlebotomy
- emptying urine bags
- emptying bedpans or urinals
- emptying drains
- removal of short peripheral IVs

### What is a Sharps injury?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines a sharps injury as a penetrating stab wound from a needle, scalpel, or other **sharp** object that may result in exposure to blood or other body fluids. Sharps injuries may occur when PCAs are performing phlebotomy, a frequent and high-risk activity that is an important part of the PCA role.

### What do you need to know?

Protect yourself! Wear eye protection to prevent splashes or exposures when performing high risk activities.



Use in-vein retractable butterfly needles correctly! Always retract the butterfly while it is still in the patient's vein. NEVER withdraw the butterfly needle and then retract as this puts you at risk for exposure to a contaminated sharp needle and for a splash exposure due to the force of the retraction.

### What is the role of the PCA (under the direction of the RN)?

Be safe! Use standard precautions (gloves, gown, mask, eye protection) for any activities that put you at risk for exposure to blood and body fluids.

Be sure to contact Occupational Health Services immediately after any exposure at 617-726-2217 or pager #2-1272.