



# HEALTH ADVISORY #116

## Injection Safety Recommendations

**TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities**

**FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health Commissioner and State Health Officer**

**DATE: 04-28-2016**

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

Since 2009, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health has conducted six (6) investigations where unsafe injection practices were suspected to contribute to disease transmission. As a result of these investigations, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health has recommended bloodborne pathogen screening for more than 4,000 patients. Many of these lapses involved improper access of medication vials or containers which were used to prepare injections for multiple patients.

Protect your patients, yourself, and your business by following safe injection practices. You can minimize infection control problems by adhering to these basic standards of care:

1. Follow proper infection control practices and maintain aseptic technique during the preparation and administration of injected medications.
  - Perform hand hygiene before preparing and administering injected medications.
  - Prepare injections in a designated clean medication preparation area free from potential sources of contamination (e.g., used equipment, sinks).
2. Never reuse syringes for more than one patient, even if the needle is changed. Never enter a medication vial with a used syringe or needle, even when obtaining additional doses for an individual patient.
  - Reusing syringes for multiple patients or to withdraw additional medication can spread bloodborne viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or HIV.
3. Do not use medications labeled as single-dose or single-use for more than one patient.
  - Saline bags, ampules, prefilled-syringes, and other medications labeled as single-dose or single-use, are only meant for use in a single patient.
  - Leftover contents should not be stored or combined for later use.
4. If used, dedicate multi-dose vials to a single patient whenever possible. If multi-dose vials must be used for more than one patient, they should only be kept and accessed in a dedicated medication preparation area, away from immediate patient treatment areas.
  - If a multi-dose vial enters an immediate patient treatment area, it should be dedicated for single-patient use only.

Healthcare providers should review medication preparation and administration procedures with staff and colleagues and ensure that all infection control recommendations, including safe injection practices, are understood and followed by all. The CDC's One & Only Campaign offers educational resources, such as toolkits and checklists on injection safety for healthcare providers and staff. You can find these materials and more at [www.oneandonlycampaign.org](http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org).

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance. Warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.