



Technical Bulletin

Division of Public and Behavioral Health



Date: September 11, 2014

Topic: Risk of Transmission of Blood-Borne Pathogens from Shared Use of Single-Use Fingerstick Devices

Contact: Julia Peek, Manager, Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology

To: Health Care Providers

Current Situation

The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health is reminding health care professionals that single-use fingerstick devices for blood glucose monitoring should not be used on multiple patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have noted a progressive increase in reports of bloodborne infection transmission (primarily hepatitis B virus) resulting from the shared use of fingerstick and point-of-care blood testing devices over the past 10 to 15 years. The CDC has become increasingly concerned about the risks for transmitting hepatitis B virus (HBV) and other bloodborne pathogens to persons undergoing fingerstick procedures for blood sampling -- for instance, persons with diabetes who require assistance monitoring their blood glucose levels. This notice serves as a reminder that fingerstick devices should never be used for more than one person.

Fingerstick Devices

Fingerstick devices, also called lancing devices, are used to prick the skin and obtain drops of blood for blood glucose testing. There are two main types of fingerstick devices:

- **Reusable Devices:** These devices often resemble a pen and have the means to remove and replace the lancet after each use, allowing the device to be used more than once with a new lancet every time. Due to difficulties with cleaning and disinfection after use and their link to numerous outbreaks, CDC recommends **these devices never be used for more than one person**. If these devices are used, it should only be by individual persons using these devices for self-monitoring of blood glucose.
- **Single-use, auto-disabling fingerstick devices:** These devices are disposable and prevent reuse through an auto-disabling feature. In settings where assisted monitoring of blood glucose is performed, single-use, auto-disabling fingerstick devices should be used. This prevents the possibility of spreading bloodborne pathogens.

Recommended Practices for Preventing Bloodborne Pathogen Transmission During Blood Glucose Monitoring

- Fingerstick devices, especially the devices that resemble a pen, should **never** be used for more than one person.
- Select single-use lancets that permanently retract upon puncture. This adds an extra layer of safety for the patient and the provider.
- Auto-disabling, single-use fingerstick devices should be used for assisted monitoring of blood glucose.
- Dispose of used lancets at the point of use in an approved sharps container. Never reuse lancets.
- Insulin pens, other medication cartridges, and syringes are for single-patient-use only and should **never** be used for more than one person.
- Whenever possible, blood glucose meters should not be shared. If they must be shared, the device should be cleaned and disinfected after every use, per manufacturer's instructions. If the manufacturer does not specify how the device should be cleaned and disinfected then it should not be shared.
- If a reusable device is in use, it should be dedicated to one patient and clearly marked with the patient's name to avoid use on other patients. Once a patient is discharged from the facility, the device must be sent home with them or properly and promptly discarded.
- Unused supplies and medications should be prepared and maintained in clean areas separate from used supplies and equipment (e.g., glucose meters). Do not carry supplies and medications in pockets.

- Wear gloves during blood glucose monitoring and during any other procedure that involves potential exposure to blood or body fluids.
- Change gloves between patient contacts. Change gloves that have touched potentially blood-contaminated objects or fingerstick wounds before touching clean surfaces. Discard gloves in appropriate receptacles.
- Perform hand hygiene immediately after removal of gloves and before touching other medical supplies intended for use on other persons.

These recommendations apply not only to licensed healthcare facilities but also to any setting where fingerstick procedures are performed.

For More Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/blood-glucose-monitoring.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/Fingerstick-DevicesBGM.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Settings/GlucoseMonitoring.htm>

Food and Drug Administration (FDA):

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/AlertsandNotices/ucm224025.htm>

One and Only Campaign- Insulin Pen Safety:

<http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/content/insulin-pen-safety>



Tracey Green, MD
Chief Medical Officer



Richard Whitley, MS
Administrator