



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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For immediate release
March 14, 2019

NWHU reminds public to follow steps to safe needle disposal

With spring weather quickly approaching, many workplaces, community groups and individuals will be taking steps to clean up outdoor spaces. The Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) would like to remind the public that there is a chance that a discarded needle may be part of the garbage found.

“Knowing how to safely dispose of a found needle is very important. Handling needles incorrectly can lead to needle poke injuries and potential infections,” says Gillian Lunny, Manager Sexual Health and Harm Reduction at the NWHU. She continues, “We encourage parents, teachers and adults to remind children to never touch a needle and to tell an adult right away if one is found.”

Keep yourself and others safe by following these steps to safe needle pick-up:

- If possible, use gloves and tongs to pick-up the needle.
- Never put the cap back on a needle.
- Place the needle in a hard-sided plastic container, point-end first, tightly seal and label “Needle”.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after picking up a needle.
- Return the needle to your local NWHU office.
- Never put needles down the toilet, in drains or in the garbage.

In the spring, Public Health Nurses throughout the region will be distributing educational materials to workplaces, community partners and schools about what to do if you find a needle.

The NWHU Harm Reduction program provides free resources, training and equipment to community members, organizations and workplaces to support safe needle disposal and minimize the risk of exposure to infections. These services include providing:

- Mountable sharps containers,
- Workplace presentations, and
- Needle pick-up kits.

For more information or to request a presentation, please contact your local Northwestern Health Unit office.

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