



**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

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For Immediate Release  
March 20, 2017

### **Northwestern Health Unit reminds public to follow steps for 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. Picking up needles incorrectly can lead to exposure to infections such as Tetanus, Hepatitis C and HIV through a needle poke injury,” says Brittni Trudgen, Public Health Nurse 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, 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.

During the month of April, 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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