



UH IBC : Reuse of Needles in Research Animals Guidance

Guideline 1.0 Version 1.0
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Purpose: Often for reasons of convenience and cost savings, syringes and needles used to inject research animals are often reused. This practice, while widespread, puts research animals at risk of disease from needle sharing, and also can cause unnecessary pain and distress from injections given with a dull needle. In addition, The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states that, “Aseptic technique is used to reduce microbial contamination to the lowest possible practical level.”

DIRECTION:

In most instances the reuse of needles on multiple animals is not permitted. It can lead to dulling of the needle, increasing the discomfort associated with injections, and can lead to disease transmission and/or contamination of vials of material to be injected. In rare cases IACUC approval may be granted for needle reuse. **No disposable needle reuse is permitted in USDA-covered species (e.g., nonhuman primates, dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits, etc.)**

Examples of Justification for Needle Reuse:

- Severely limited available volume of test article.
- Needles specifically designed for reuse (with appropriate sterilization).

General Consideration for Needle Reuse with Veterinary or IACUC Approval:

- A needle may not be used on more than five animals, and must be replaced before this point if there is evidence that it is becoming dull (e.g., needle is difficult to insert through skin).
- A needle should only be reused on animals from the same cage/group to avoid transmission of infectious diseases from one cage to the next.
- A needle and syringe used to treat an animal known to be sick may not be reused in any other animal.
- A needle used for intravenous (IV) or intraperitoneal (IP), intradermal, intramuscular or retro-orbital injection may not be used on more than one animal.
- A needle, once used on an animal, may not be reintroduced into the vial of material being injected to avoid the possibility of significant bacterial contamination at subsequent use.

If safety needles or sharps newer technology is available, this should be used instead of straight sharps.