

## Safety Practice Update: Avoid Recapping Needles

Recapping needles is the leading cause of needlestick accidents at UCSF.

During the recent Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) visit to UCSF, the inspectors noted the presence of a large number of recapped needles in sharps containers at numerous locations. The inspectors commented that recapping needles is not a prudent practice and increases the risk for an accidental needlestick.



UCSF Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan states that the practice of recapping needles is “**very strongly discouraged**.” Compliance with this policy is inconsistent with the findings of many instances of recapped needles. Therefore, the Institutional Biosafety Committee has determined that compliance with this policy must be improved

Please review your current research procedures and techniques when using needles. If your current research practices do not absolutely require recapping of needles, then **directly dispose of used syringes with attached uncapped needles into sharps containers**.

In addition, please discuss this matter at your laboratory meetings and advise all sharps users to reduce needle recapping to a bare minimum.

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## Safety Practice Update: Working with Autologous (Own) Blood or Tissues in the Laboratory is Prohibited at UCSF

Due to recent incidents involving exposures to researchers' own blood derivatives, this update addresses the increased risks involved when working with autologous biomaterials.

Researchers should never handle their own cells because these cells will express the tissue type of the researcher and may evade the normal immune responses that recognize and destroy foreign cells. As cells processed in the laboratory may potentially contain hazardous agents found in the research environment, the inability of your immune system to clear these autologous cells greatly increases the risk of exposure.

Therefore, UCSF Institutional Biosafety Committee policy, based on the CDC's "Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories" (BMBL), states that **laboratory workers must never handle autologous cells or tissues**. In addition, any blood draws must be conducted by a physician or certified phlebotomist.