67 Pharma Workers Tested for HIV and Hepatitis After Flu Shot Snafu

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NBC10 reports from Otsuka Pharmaceutical in New Jersey.

A nurse reused a syringe while giving flu shots to 67 employees at Otsuka Pharmaceutical in New Jersey, prompting the workers to be tested for HIV and hepatitis B and C, reports NBC10 news.

TotalWellness, an employer group that contracted the nurse to give the flu vaccinations, was notified on September 30 that the nurse failed to follow all safety procedures. Working with the New Jersey department of health, TotalWellness is working to ensure everyone affected received proper screenings and care.

“The needles were changed between each patient but the syringe was reused multiple times,” wrote health officials to the Otsuka employees. “Syringe reuse may have exposed you to infected blood. At this time NJDOH is not aware of any disease transmission, but you may be at risk for developing an infection as a result of this improper practice.”

According to the NBC report, health officials said the risk for infection was “low” but they recommended that all employees be tested for HIV as well as hepatitis B and C viruses. Employees need to be tested again in four to six months because the virus might take that long to show up on tests.

In addition to reusing the syringe, the nurse also administered the wrong dose of the flu shot, meaning that the employees might not be fully vaccinated and should get another flu shot.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/flu-shot-exposure-27899-9598