



### **Issue: Re-use of Vacutainer Barrels**

*Raised by:* Raelene Mungatopi, AHW, Milikapiti Health Centre

*Background:* Requests clarification about the reuse or otherwise of Vacutainer barrels. In the past these have not been reused, but the pathology service provider that supplies these devices is encouraging staff to reuse them.

*Discussion:* Discussion centred on current practice and on information made available by those consulted. It became apparent that only some brands of barrels are marked "for single use only"; others are technically reusable.

There are dangers inherent in any reuse of devices used for patient care, especially in the remote health centres where facilities are limited. According to the Therapeutic Goods Administration Regulations, only hospitals are likely to have facilities that will meet the very high standards of cleaning and sterilisation required.

There is also a significant risk of needle stick injury with the removal of the needle from the barrel.

This matter is currently under review by the Centre for Disease Control and a definitive decision will be made at a later date. Until the evidence is reviewed, CDC recommends discarding barrels after each use.

*Consultation:* Within Best Practice group, Centre for Disease Control, RDH Infection Control staff, Darwin CDC staff

*References:* Correspondence from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing Therapeutic Goods Administration "Re-manufacture of single use medical devices" dated 27 June 2005,

RDH Clinical Practice Manual, December 2002, "V-4 Venepuncture".

RDH Infection Control Manual, 2004, "10.3 Reprocessing single use instruments and equipment".

Internet searches: *Statement by the Therapeutic Goods Administration on Regulations for the sterilisation of single use devices. 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2003. 2004.*

Pathology equipment provider sites.

*Outcome* **Do not reuse Vacutainer barrels.** They must be discarded (with the needle attached) into the sharps container. This decision may be reviewed on further advice from CDC.