



How to Safely Dispose of Household Sharps



What are household sharps?

Syringes, needles, pen needles, and lancets used for self-care or care of family members in a residential setting.

Why should I treat my sharps any differently than other trash? Managing sharps will protect your family, friends, neighbors, and sanitation workers from accidental needle sticks .

What should I do with used sharps at home? You can either store your used needles for future disposal or destroy them immediately after use, but **NEVER place loose used sharps in the trash can.**

If you choose to **store** used needles for future disposal:

- Place used sharps in a hard plastic container using a sharps/biohazard container **or** a hard plastic container with a screw-on lid such as a laundry detergent bottle.
- Do not store sharps in glass bottles, aluminum cans, or coffee cans.
- Put sharps in the container needle first.
- Keep this container out of reach of children and pets.



If you chose to **destroy** your used needles immediately after use:

- Purchase a needle destruction device that either cuts or incinerates used needles.
 - A needle incinerator is a small, portable device that uses a few seconds of high heat to melt needles and reduce them to BB-size balls. Once the needle or lancet is destroyed in an incineration device, the remaining syringe and melted metal can be safely disposed of in the garbage.
 - A needle cutter that automatically stores the cut needles is also useful while away from home when a disposal container is not available. Clipped needles should be disposed in the same manner as any other used needle.

How can I dispose of my sharps safely?

1. Take used syringes to a medical facility (doctor's office, hospital, pharmacy) **that accepts used syringes**. Ask your medical provider for more information. Be sure to follow all instructions given including what type of container you need to use. **DO NOT** take used needles and syringes to a facility that does not accept them.

2. Mail your used syringes to a syringe mail-back program such as:

- <https://store.stericycle.com/store/medical-waste-mailback/>
- <http://www.safeneedledisposal.org/solutions/pharmaceutical-programs/>

Follow all requirements for packaging and mailing as provided by the company you choose.

3. Exchange your used syringes for clean syringes through an exchange program such as:

- <http://atlantaharmreduction.org/programs.aspx>

Follow all requirements for storage as provided by the program you choose.

4. Place used sharps that are stored in a hard plastic bottle into the **trash** once the bottle is a little over half-full.

- Be sure the bottle is labeled "Do Not Recycle. Household Sharps"
- Ensure the top is screwed tightly on, and secure it with tape.
- Never place containers of used sharps into the recycling.



For more information visit the following websites:

- <http://medicalwasteregulations.com/states/georgia-medical-waste-disposal-regulations/>
- Diabetes.org syringe safety
- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/disposal.html>
- <http://www.safeneedledisposal.org/>
- https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/med-home_0.pdf

