



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 chose 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** bring 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:
 - <http://www.stericycle.com/consumer-needle-disposal.html>
 - <http://www.myhumira.com/Disposal/Default.aspx> (for patients treated with Humira)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://www.atlantaharmreduction.org/>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://rules.sos.state.ga.us/docs/391/3/4/15.pdf>
- <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/medication/insulin/insulin-storage-and-syringe.html>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/needledisposal/ga/index.htm>
- <http://www.safeneedledisposal.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=72>
- <http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/han-care.pdf>