



# How to Safely Dispose of Household Sharps



**What are household sharps?** Syringes, needles, pens, razor blades, contaminated broken glass and some plastics, 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:  
<https://atlantaharmreduction.org/programs-services/syringe-exchange/>  
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:**

- <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/consumer-products/safely-using-sharps-needles-and-syringes-home-work-and-travel>
- [Diabetes.org syringe safety](https://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](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/med-home_0.pdf)

