

HOW TO SAFELY DISPOSE OF HOUSEHOLD SHARPS

What are household sharps?

Syringes, needles, pens, razor blades, contaminated broken glass and some plastics, needles, or lancets used for self-care or care of family members or pets in a residential setting.



Why should I treat my sharps any different 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:

- Immediately 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.
- Place sharps in the container needle first.
- Keep this sealed container out of reach of children and pets.



If you choose 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 of 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:
 - [Stericycle Medical Waste Mail-back](#)
 - [Safe Needle Disposal Mail-Back & Container 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 the [Georgia Harm Reduction Syringe Services Program](#). 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 sealed 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:

- [Safely Using Sharps \(Needles and Syringes\) at Home, at Work and on Travel](#)
- [American Diabetes Association Insulin Storage and Syringe Safety](#)
- [Strategies for Sharps Disposal Container Use During Supply Shortages](#)
- [Safe Needle Disposal Mail-Back & Container Programs](#)
- [Safe Options for Home Needle Disposal](#)

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