

Disposal of Home –Generated Biomedical Waste Guidelines & Recommendations

You may use needles or syringes as part of your home medication care. Special care must be taken with the disposal of these items in order to protect you and others from injury and to make sure the environment is clean and safe. Here are some commonly asked questions.

What is a home-generated biomedical waste?

Any type of syringe, lancet or needle used in the home to inject medication, give medication by intravenous infusion and to draw blood. These items are sometimes referred to as “sharps”.

What is a sharps container?

This is a hard plastic puncture proof container that can be used to dispose of needles, lancets or syringes. You have probably seen them at your doctor’s office or in the hospital; they are usually red in color. You can purchase a sharps container for use in the home at a pharmacy or a medical supply store. Once you have it $\frac{3}{4}$ filled you should close the container with a lid attached to it.

What do I do with my needles and syringes if I do not have a sharps container?

Place all needles, syringes, lancets and other sharp objects into a hard plastic container with a screw-on top or other tightly securable lid (e.g. empty liquid detergent container). Make sure the container you use is leak proof, shatter proof and puncture proof. Before discarding, reinforce the top with heavy-duty tape. Do not use clear plastic or glass containers. When your container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, seal it and dispose of it.

How do I dispose of my sharps once the container is full?

This is a difficult question to answer as the laws governing this can be different from town to town. Here are some guidelines:

- Check with your local waste collection service to see what procedure you should follow.
- Check with your local health department for the disposal policy of sharps in your area.
- Consult with your doctor’s office about the possibility of disposal of sharps at their office during your next office visit.

Some Needle-stick safety guidelines:

- Never recap needles
- Place all used needles or other sharp items into an appropriate disposal container immediately after use.
- Plan for the safe handling and disposal of needles before using them
- Report all needles sticks or sharps related injuries promptly to your doctor.