



Tips on Safe Disposal of Home-Generated Needles and Other Sharps

Every year, Americans use over one billion sharp objects in their homes to administer health care. These "sharps" include lancets, needles and syringes. If they are not disposed of in puncture-resistant containers, they can cause injury and also create environmental problems.

YOU can help prevent injury and protect our environment by following some simple steps when you dispose of your home health care "sharps". The solutions are simple and sensible. This is what we suggest.

- When purchasing needles from your local pharmacy, either:
 - Purchase mail-in needle storage containers, or
 - Purchase approved red plastic medical waste containers to store needles
- If you cannot purchase storage containers, place and store used needles in an empty plastic container. Mark the container with a **red** marking pen. A sharps container should be a rigid puncture-resistant container, such as an orange juice jug, that, when sealed, is leak resistant and cannot be reopened without great difficulty. Use duct tape to seal the container.
- Do not break the needles off. They become less visible and are still an exposure risk if the container breaks open. Replace the cap before placing them in the storage container.
- Make sure that you keep containers with sharp objects out of the reach of young children.
- **When your container is 3/4 full, close it using either the locking lid or duct tape the lid on securely.** Forcing needles into a full container can cause injury.
- To dispose of the container:
 - Use your mail away program or
 - **Put container on top of your trash in your garbage can.**

Thank you in advance for your attention to the safe disposal of sharps. It is not illegal for residents to place needles in their trash containers. However, your cooperation will reduce unnecessary exposure to our local solid waste workers and to workers at the regional landfill as well.

Questions? Call Douglas Disposal and Recycling at 775 782-5713.