



Northampton County

Disposing of SHARPS from Households: Do's and Don't's



Needles and syringes from a household or other place of lodging, such as a motel or hotel, are not considered medical waste. But they should be disposed of with care.

Remember, someone such as a garbage man or sewage treatment worker, housekeeper or child who is stuck with a needle does not know whether this needle can give them HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B or C. With only a few easy steps, people at home can avoid accidental injury to themselves or to others by throwing needles away properly.

SHARPS include:

- Needles,
- Syringes,
- Lancets
- Other sharp objects
- Soiled bandages,
- Disposable sheets
- Gloves

How to avoid needle sticks:

- DON'T throw loose needles into the garbage.
- DON'T flush, bury or burn needles.
- DON'T use a container that isn't strong enough to keep the needles from sticking through the sides.
- DON'T use clear plastic or glass containers.
- DON'T mix needles with things that you recycle.
- DON'T leave needles where other people can get them.



If you are unable to properly dispose of SHARPS at your local hospital, pharmacy or you cannot use a mail-back service, check with your garbage hauler to see if you are allowed to throw your needles out with your household garbage. If this is okay, then:

- Put needles into a container that has a lid and strong enough to keep needles from sticking through the sides, i.e. liquid detergent bottles or metal cans.
- Throw the container away in your garbage before it is full to the top.
- Label the container "Syringes," "SHARPS," or "Needles."
- Put the container lid on tight and use heavy tape to keep it on.
- Put the container in the center of your garbage.



SHARP Disposal Options:

- Ask a doctor if they will accept properly "containerized" used sharps for safe disposal
- Contact a local hospital to see if it will accept used sharps that have been properly secured in a container
- Check with a pharmacy. Some sell specially designed containers for use by homeowners securing health care wastes for disposal in household trash. Some pharmacies also sell "mail-back: containers that are mailed to companies that incinerate the used sharps.

Syringes, Hypodermic

Needles and Lancets - "SHARPS" - are banned from landfills. Loose SHARPS cannot be put in the trash, recycling bin or flushed down the toilet. Please put them in a sealed container such as a heavy-duty plastic or metal container with a tight-fitting lid or an FDA - approved Sharps Disposal container.