

DO's and DON'Ts

Safe Disposal of Needles and Other Sharps Used At Home, At Work, or While Traveling

Do

- Immediately place used needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle-sticks, cuts, or punctures from loose sharps.
- Use an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container, if possible. If an FDA-cleared container isn't available, some organizations and community guidelines recommend using a heavy-duty plastic household container (i.e. laundry detergent container) as an alternative.
- Make sure that if a household disposal container is used, it has the basic features of a good disposal container. (See box at right for more info.)
- Be prepared — carry a portable sharps disposal container for travel.
- Follow your community guidelines for getting rid of your sharps disposal container.
- Call your local trash or public health department (listed in the county and city government section of your phone book) to find out about sharps disposal programs in your area.
- Ask your health care provider, veterinarian, local hospital or pharmacist
 - where and how you can obtain an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container,
 - if they can dispose of your used needles and other sharps, or
 - if they know of safe disposal programs near you.
- Keep all needles and other sharps and sharps disposal containers out of reach of children and pets.



All sharps disposal containers should be:

- made of a heavy-duty plastic;
- able to close with a tight-fitting, puncture-proof lid, without sharps being able to come out;
- upright and stable during use;
- leak-resistant; and
- properly labeled.

Don't

- Throw needles and other sharps into the trash.
- Flush needles and other sharps down the toilet.
- Put needles and other sharps in your recycling bin — they are not recyclable.
- Try to remove, bend, break, or recap needles used by another person. This can lead to accidental needle sticks, which may cause serious infections.
- Attempt to remove the needle without a needle clipper device because the needles could fall, fly off, or get lost and injure someone.

Best Way to Get Rid of Used Needles and Other Sharps:

Step 1: Place all needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used.

Step 2: Dispose of used sharps disposal containers according to your community guidelines.

For more information visit, www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal.