

SHARPS DISPOSAL

The improper disposal of sharps, such as throwing sharps unprotected into the trash, can be dangerous to patients and others who may unknowingly be placed at risk.

WHAT IS A SHARP?

A sharp is generally any hypodermic needle, pen needle, intravenous needle, lancet, or other device used in assessment or treatment of a condition or delivery of medication.



More information on the proper disposal of Sharps can be found on the following website:

www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/medical/disposal.htm

Or call: The Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal at (800) 643-1643

PROPER DISPOSAL OF SHARPS

- Used sharps should be placed in a puncture-proof container and taken to appropriate collection sites. These may include medical offices, hospitals, pharmacies, health departments, fire stations or other locations.
- Call your local solid waste department or public health department for information on correct sharps disposal in your area. Many areas provide drop boxes or supervised collection sites. Several states allow disposal (in labeled, puncture-proof containers) with regular trash, but make sure to confirm that this is permitted before attempting.
- Ask your health care provider or pharmacist if they offer disposal, or if they know of safe disposal programs in your area.
- Visit the Center for Disease Control's Safe Community Needle Disposal which provides the laws and regulations affecting the labeling, transportation, and disposal of used needles and other sharps in the community.

IF YOU ARE STILL HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING THE RIGHT METHOD OF DISPOSAL THAT WORKS FOR YOU, YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK INTO:

- **Mail-Back Programs:** Patients place their used sharps in special containers and return the container by mail to a collection site for proper disposal. There is usually a fee for this type of service; however, several pharmaceutical manufacturers offer this as a free service for patients who use their medications. You may find some mail back options by checking with your health care provider, pharmacist, yellow pages, or searching the internet using keywords "sharps mail back."
- **Needle Destruction Devices:** Several manufacturers offer products that allow patients to destroy used needles at home by severing, burning or melting the needle, rendering it safe for disposal. Again, check with your pharmacist or search the Internet for "sharps disposal devices."