

Sharps Disposal

What are “sharps”?

Sharps are needles, lancets and syringes. To prevent injury and the spread of disease, you must store and dispose of sharps properly. Never leave them out where someone could get hurt.

If you will dispose of your sharps

Storing your sharps

Store your used sharps in either:

- **A sharps container.** You can buy this at your drug store or pharmacy.
- **An empty bottle of laundry detergent.** The bottle should have a screw-on lid.
 - Label the bottle. The label should read “Do Not Recycle: Household Sharps.”
 - Put the cap back on after placing sharps in the bottle.
- **A needle cutter.** You may buy this at your drug store or pharmacy. The device will cut and store your needles. You may wish to carry a needle cutter while away from home.

Place sharps point-first into the container. When it is about half-full, it is ready for disposal.

Don't store sharps in glass bottles, coffee cans or aluminum cans. Keep your sharps out of the reach of children and pets.

Disposing of sharps

Never throw loose sharps in the trash. Never place a container with sharps in a recycling bin.

Instead, choose one of these options:

- **Mail-back programs.** You may mail your used sharps to licensed disposal company. There is a fee for this service. Try one of the following:
 - Medasend, Inc.: 800-200-3581, www.medadyne.com
 - Sharps Compliance, Inc.: 800-772-5657, www.sharpsinc.com
 - Stericycle, Inc.: 866-783-7422, www.stericycle.com
- **In Minnesota:** It is legal to put a laundry bottle full of used sharps into the garbage, as long as the bottle has a tight lid. Duct-tape the lid to the bottle, and then place the bottle in a brown bag. Throw the bag in the garbage.
- **In Wisconsin:** You may bring your sharps container to an approved collection station. To find a station near you, call 1-888-936-7463 or 608-266-2621. Some stations will charge a fee for this service.

If you will destroy your sharps

You may buy a “needle destruction device.” Use this to destroy needles and lancets after each use.

The device will melt your sharps into small metal balls. You may throw the melted metal in the garbage. (Do not recycle.)

For more information

To learn more about household hazardous wastes and collection programs, contact your county’s solid waste office. Or check the Internet to find a program near you.

- In Minnesota: www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/living-green/citizens.html
- In Wisconsin: dnr.wi.gov/topic/waste/householdhw.html