Types of Programs for Disposal

- Drop Box or Supervised Collection Points
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Sites
- Mail-Back Programs
- Syringe Exchange Programs
- Residential Special Waste Pick-up Service
- In-Home Individual Disposal Products

Sharps Containers

The FDA recommends that needles and other sharps be immediately placed in FDA-cleared sharps disposal containers, which are generally available through pharmacies, medical supply companies, health care providers, and online.

If an FDA-cleared container is not available, some guidelines recommend using a heavy-duty plastic household container as an alternative, which should be leak-resistant with a tight-fitting, puncture-resistant lid, such as a plastic laundry detergent container.

Getting in Touch with Safe Needle Disposal

Contact us to learn more about Safe Needle Disposal or online advertising opportunities.

E-mail:
safeneedledisposal@needymeds.org

Phone:
1-800-643-1643

Mailing Address:
Safe Needle Disposal
PO Box 219
Gloucester, MA 01931

Resources for Safe Disposal of Needles and Sharps

Search for Locations Near You.
Search by ZIP code or state on SafeNeedleDisposal.org.

Mail-Back Programs.
Find Pharmaceutical Takeback Programs and Container Programs.

Solutions for Sharps Disposal.
Learn what to do if there are no locations nearby.

A trusted project from NeedyMeds
What Are Sharps?

“Sharps” is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. Examples of sharps include:

**Needles** – hollow needles used to inject drugs (medication) under the skin through a needle.

**Syringes** – devices used to inject medication into or withdraw fluid from the body.

**Lancets, also called “fingerstick” devices** – instruments with a short, two-edged blade used to get drops of blood for testing. Lancets are commonly used in the treatment of diabetes.

**Auto Injectors, including epinephrine and insulin pens** – syringes pre-filled with fluid medication designed to be self-injected into the body.

**Infusion Sets** – tubing systems with a needle used to deliver drugs to the body.

**Connection Needles/Sets** – Needles that connect to a tube used to transfer fluids in and out of the body. This is generally used for patients on home hemodialysis.

The Problem

A critical public health issue exists in the United States: limited options available for the safe disposal of used needles and other sharps in the community at large.

Many self-injectors are unaware of safe disposal methods available to them and simply throw their used needles in the trash or flush them down the toilet, posing a risk of injury or potential infection to anyone who encounters them.

Despite the growing problems associated with improper disposal of household-generated needles, there are no consistent regulations or guidelines for safe disposal. Laws and regulations governing medical waste (including needles and other sharps) were initially designed for health care facilities and medical waste operations. These laws and regulations are separate from household waste.

Since regulations and guidelines for needle disposal in local communities are often inconsistent and poorly publicized, we serve as an information resource for community-sponsored sharps disposal programs and other safe disposal options.

Established in 2002, Safe Needle Disposal was formerly known as “The Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal.” In 2014, NeedyMeds, a national non-profit whose mission is to educate and empower those seeking affordable healthcare, assumed ownership of the information from the original Coalition organization.

Safe Needle Disposal continues to exist as an information resource for community-sponsored sharps disposal programs and other options for sharps disposal. We serve to educate the public about safe disposal for all “at-home” users of sharps.