

## Disposal of Sharps

### What are sharps?

Sharps are used syringes, hypodermic needles and vials left over after giving injections. If you are one of many people who give yourself or a family member injections at home, you need to know how to dispose of your sharps safely and legally.

### How do I dispose of my used sharps?

Do not put sharps in your home or community garbage and recycling, even if they are in a sealed container. This is a health hazard. In many counties, it is against the law to throw away sharps in household garbage cans. Please use only approved sharps containers in the home setting. Sharps containers are usually plastic red containers labeled with the word "Sharps" and a biohazard symbol to identify the contents as a potential danger. This is the safest method for collecting and storing used sharps in the home. If you do not have an approved sharps container, a rigid container with a small opening and a lid, like a gallon milk container, may be used. It is not safe to use empty 2-liter pop bottles—needles can poke through the thin plastic.

### Where can I get a red sharps container?

- First, check with the pharmacy where you get your medicines and syringes. Many pharmacies sell sharps containers or provide them for customers.



Use approved sharps containers like this one to dispose of your used needles and syringes.

Check the following Web sites or search the Internet for mail-back programs that provide sharps containers and pick-up service for a small fee:

[www.sharpsdisposal.com](http://www.sharpsdisposal.com)

<http://www.stericycle.com/mailback.html>

Ask your health care provider for a container.

### Where do I dispose of my full containers?

Follow all directions on the container to close and seal it. Check to see that the container is clearly labeled "sharps" or "biohazard." If you are using a rigid container, be sure to tape the lid securely. Every county and city has different options for sharps disposals.

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### Where do I dispose of my full containers? continued

You will need to find out what options are offered in your city or county. If you need assistance with this, ask your health care provider. Or, you can try these steps:

- Check with the pharmacy that dispenses your medicines. Many pharmacies have drop-off sites for sharps containers.
- Check with your county public health department or your city public utilities department that handles solid waste garage for local options to dispose of sharps containers. You can find these numbers in the local phone book, usually in the community or blue pages. A local librarian is also a helpful resource for locating community resources and phone numbers.
- Ask your medical provider if he or she will accept full sharps containers.

### Locations for sharps disposal stations in King County

#### City of Seattle Customer Service

(206) 684-8400, option #4, option #1

- North Recycling and Disposal Station – 1350 North 34<sup>th</sup> Street (Located in the Fremont/Wallingford area)
- South Recycling and Disposal Station – 8105 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (Located south of the First Avenue South Bridge)

#### King County Waste Disposal

(206) 296-4466

<http://www.metrokc.gov/>

They will mail you a list of sites that accept sharps.

#### King County Needle Exchange

(800) 678-1595

#### Snohomish County Sharps Disposal

No disposal service through the county garbage pick-up or transfer stations. Call (425) 388-3425, option #0, and ask for a list of participating pharmacies that provide drop-off services for sharps.

#### For other counties' sharp disposal sites, search the Web:

Go to the Washington State Health Department map link to find your county health department:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm>

Use the keywords: sharps disposal, needle exchange programs, biohazard waste disposal, safe needle disposal, metro(city).gov, recycling and disposal stations

For more information on safe needle disposal, visit [www.safeneedledisposal.org](http://www.safeneedledisposal.org).

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Ambulatory Care Services, (206) 987-1650
- Your Child's Health Care Provider

*Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.*

*This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.*