

Disposal of Sharps

What are sharps?

Sharps are used syringes, needles, detachable insulin pen needles, and vials left over after giving injections. If you give injections at home, you need to know how to dispose of your sharps safely and legally.

How do I dispose of my used sharps?

We strongly recommend that you use only approved sharps containers in the home setting (see below). Sharps can carry blood that may have germs that cause disease. In many counties, it is against the law to throw away sharps in household garbage cans.

Never flush sharps down the toilet.



Do not put sharps in your home or community garbage and recycling, even if they are in a sealed container.



Check with your county. Some counties allow the use of makeshift containers like empty 2-liter detergent bottles.

It is not safe to use an empty 2-liter pop bottle – needles can poke through the thin plastic.



What are sharps containers?

Sharps containers are usually plastic red containers labeled with the word “Sharps” and a biohazard symbol to identify the contents as a potential danger (see the picture on the right). This is the safest method for collecting and storing used sharps in the home.



Where can I get a red sharps container?

Pharmacies: Check with the pharmacy where you get your child’s medicines and syringes. Many pharmacies sell sharps containers or provide them for customers. Seattle Children’s Ocean Pharmacy has sharps containers for patients picking up needles or syringes for the first time.

Internet: Check sharpsdisposal.com or search the web for mail-back programs that provide sharps containers and pick-up service for a small fee.

Your health care provider: Ask your child’s healthcare provider where to get one.

To Learn More

- Ocean Pharmacy
206-987-2138
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Where do I dispose of my full containers?

Every county and city has different options for sharps disposal. You will need to find out what options are offered in your city or county. If you need assistance with this, ask your healthcare provider. Or, you can try these steps:

- Follow all directions on the official sharps container to close and seal it. If you are using a makeshift container (empty liquid laundry detergent jug), be sure to tape the lid securely.
- Check to see that the container is clearly labeled “sharps” or “biohazard.”
- Check with the pharmacy where you get your child’s medicines, they may have a drop-off sites for sharps containers.
- Check the web for mail-back programs.
- Check with your county public health department or your city’s solid waste garbage for local options to dispose of sharps containers. You can find these numbers on the web or 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 healthcare provider if they will accept full sharps containers.

Locations for sharps disposal stations in Washington state

City of Seattle Solid Waste Recycle and Disposal Information Line

206-684-8400

- North Recycling and Disposal Station - 1350 North 34th Street
(Located in the Fremont/Wallingford area)
- South Recycling and Disposal Station - 130 South Kenyon Street

King County Public Health

Main number: 206-296-4600 or 1-800-325-6165 ext.6-4600 kingcounty.gov

- Safe and legal disposal of sharps
kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health/toxins-air-quality/needle-disposal.aspx

Snohomish County Solid Waste Management 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 or visit snoco.org, and use the key words: sharps disposal.

For other counties’ sharps disposal sites, search the web:

Go to the Washington State Health Department map link to find your county health department: doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions

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 safeneedledisposal.org.