Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Store and Get Rid of Your Home Medical Sharps

This information explains how to store and get rid of your home medical sharps safely.

Home medical sharps are devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture (pierce) your skin. Home medical sharps include items you use at home, such as:

- Needles
- Syringes
- Lancets (fingersticks used to get drops of blood for testing)
- Auto injectors, such as insulin pens

Storing Your Home Medical Sharps

- Use an empty, hard plastic container with a screw-top lid, such as a laundry detergent bottle.
  - Pick a container that’s strong enough that the sharps can’t poke through the sides.
  - Pick a container that isn’t breakable.
  - Don’t store your sharps in:
    - Glass or soda bottles
    - Milk jugs
    - Aluminum or coffee cans
    - Paper or plastic bags
- Clearly label the container “Home Medical Sharps – Not for Recycling.”

Keep it away from children and pets.

- Put the sharps in the container as soon as you're done using them. Place them point first into the container.
- Don't overfill the container. When it's more than half full, stop using it. Wrap the lid with strong tape. This will create a more secure seal and keep it from leaking.

Getting Rid of Your Home Medical Sharps

- If you live in New York City, you can place the sealed container with your regular trash for collection. Do not put it with your recyclable trash.
- If you live in a different county of New York or in another state, check with your local health department for instructions.
- You can also bring the sealed container to:
  - Your healthcare provider at your next clinic visit
  - Any hospital or nursing home in New York State
  - Your local pharmacy

Resources

NYS Safe Sharps Collection Program
www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles_syringes/sharps
This website has information on how to safely get rid of home medical sharps in New York State.

NJ Health Safe Syringe Disposal
www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/phss/safe_syringe_disposal.pdf
This website has information on how to safely get rid of home medical sharps in New Jersey.

Safe Needle Disposal
www.safeneedledisposal.org
This website has information on how to safely get rid of home medical sharps in your area. For more information, call 800-643-1643 or email info@safeneedledisposal.org.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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