

FACT SHEET

Household generated "sharps" include syringes, needles and lancets typically used in the home for insulin injection or for administering other medications.



Public Health
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Taney County Health Department
An Accredited Local Public Health Department

Disposal of Household Generated Sharps

Containers Recommended For Used Sharps

- Medical sharps container purchased from a pharmacy or health care provider
- Rigid or semi-rigid, puncture resistant and leak-proof container such as a bleach, fabric softener, or liquid detergent bottle
- Metal container with a securely fitting lid

Containers Not Recommended For Used Sharps

- Coffee cans, because plastic lids come off easily and may leak. If used, reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape
- DO NOT use glass, clear plastic containers such as milk or soda bottles or any container that will be recycled or returned to the store

How To Properly Dispose Of Used Sharps

- The person who uses the syringes, needles or lancets should place them directly into a container IMMEDIATELY after use
- Dispose of syringes as one unit, DO NOT attempt to remove, bend, break or recap the needle because you could injure yourself

How To Properly Dispose Of A Full Sharps Container

- Fill the container to 3/4 full of sharps
- Sanitize container contents with a solution of one teaspoon (1 tsp) of household bleach to one pint (1 pint) of water. Solution should cover sharps.
- Leave sharps in the solution for 30 minutes
- Carefully empty ONLY the solution from the container. If you are on a public sewer system pour contents into the toilet.
- NEVER flush needles or lancets down the toilet
- Tightly seal the container with heavy-duty tape
- Write on the container with a black permanent marker "NOT FOR RECYCLING"
- NEVER label the container "MEDICAL WASTE" OR "INFECTIOUS WASTE"
- The outside of the container should be dry and free from any contamination
- Place the prepared container in a cardboard box or plastic trash bag. Seal with heavy-duty tape and dispose in household trash

Safety Tips

- ALWAYS wash your hands after handling or touching medical sharps.
- KEEP sharps containers in a safe place, out of reach of children and pets
- DO NOT place a used sharps container with other items to be recycled
- DISPOSE of container, according to instructions listed, when container is 3/4 full