

# DO's and DON'Ts of Safe Needle Disposal

## And Other Sharps Used At Home, At Work, or While Traveling



### DO

- Immediately place used needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle-sticks, cuts, or punctures from loose sharps.
- Use an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container, if possible. If an FDA-cleared container isn't available, some organizations and community guidelines recommend using a heavy-duty plastic household container (i.e. laundry detergent container) as an alternative.
- Make sure that if a household disposal container is used, it has the basic features of a good disposal container. (See box on page 13 for more info.)
- Be prepared — carry a portable sharps disposal container for travel.
- Follow your community guidelines for getting rid of your sharps disposal container.
- Call your local trash or public health department (listed in the county and city government section of your phone book) to find out about sharps disposal programs in your area.
- Ask your health care provider, veterinarian, local hospital or pharmacist:
  - where and how you can obtain an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container,
  - if they can dispose of your used needles and other sharps, or
  - if they know of safe disposal programs near you.
- Keep all needles and other sharps and sharps disposal containers out of reach of children and pets.



### DON'T

- **Throw needles and other sharps into the trash.**
- **Flush needles and other sharps down the toilet.**
- **Put needles and other sharps into your recycling bin — they are not recyclable.**
- **Try to remove, bend, break, or recap needles used by another person. This can lead to accidental needle sticks, which may cause serious infections.**
- **Attempt to remove the needle without a needle clipper device because the needles could fall, fly off, or get lost and injure someone.**





### All Sharps disposal containers should be:

- made of a heavy-duty plastic
- able to close with a tight-fitting, puncture-proof lid, without sharps being able to come out
- upright and stable during use
- leak-resistant
- properly labeled

### Best Way to Get Rid of Used Needles and Other Sharps:

**Step 1:** Place all needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used.

**Step 2:** Dispose of used sharps disposal containers according to your community guidelines.

For more information, visit  
[www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal](http://www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal)



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