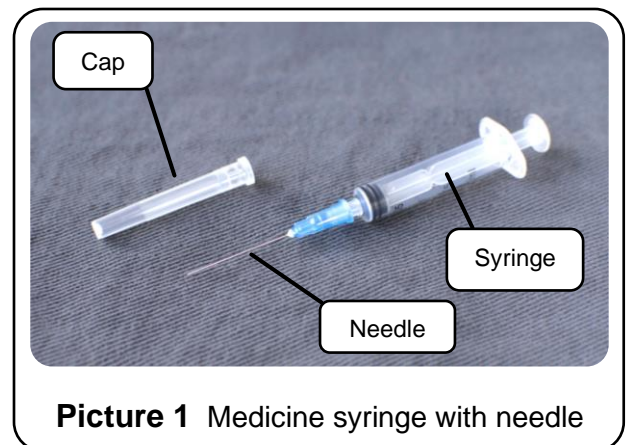


## Sharps Containers at Home

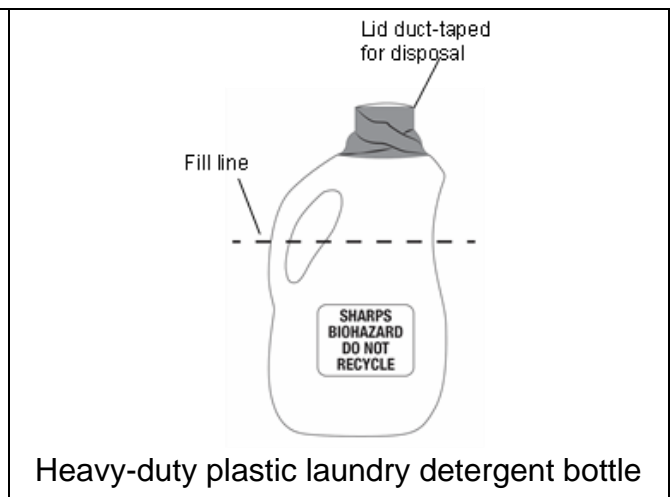
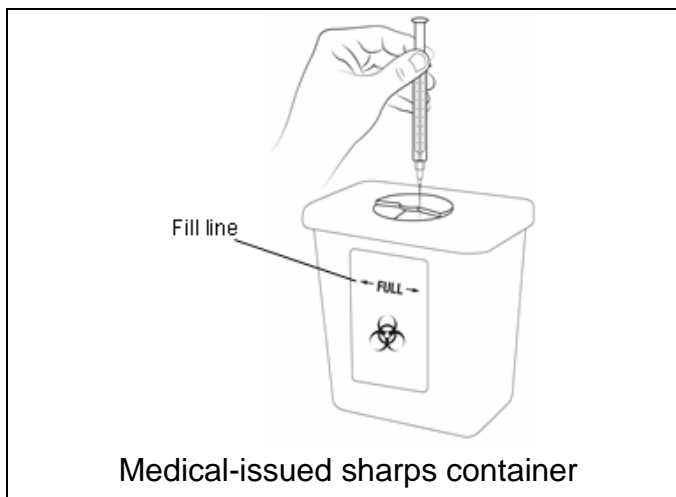
A 'sharp' is any medical device that could cut or poke someone. This is usually a needle used for giving medicine. There are many reasons that your child may have to use sharps while at home. It is very important to know how to throw away (dispose of) sharps in a safe way. By disposing of sharps the right way, you are keeping yourself, your child, and anyone else in your home safe.

### Types of Sharps

- Medicine syringe with a needle (Picture 1)
- Lancets (for finger pokes)
- Pen needles (like for insulin)
- Auto-injectors with attached needles (like for epinephrine "Epi" pens)



### Types of Containers



## Making Your Own Container

- If you do not have a medical-issued sharps container, use a container made of **heavy-duty plastic**. A laundry detergent or softener bottle works best.
  - It must close with a tight lid that screws on. Needles should not be able to poke through the lid.
  - The container must be leak-proof.
  - It must be able to sit up and not fall over.
- **DO NOT** use milk containers, water bottles, clear plastic containers such as 2-liter soda bottles, glass containers or soda cans.

## Using Your Container

- Make sure the sharp end of the needle or syringe goes into the container first and is not sticking out the top of the container.
- **NEVER** put your hand in the sharps container.
- Keep all syringes, needles, and sharps containers out of the reach of children and others who may misuse them.
- Take your sharps container with you when traveling.

## Throwing Away Your Container

- If you are using a household container, close the lid and duct tape it shut when the container gets no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
- Write on the container “**SHARPS - DO NOT RECYCLE.**”
- Put the container in the middle of a full trash bag. **DO NOT** put the container in the recycling.
- **In the state of Ohio**, you are allowed to put the trash bag that has a sharps container in it out for regular trash pick-up.
- If you live in a state that has a sharps disposal program, take the sealed and marked container to the right disposal center.
- For more information about safe sharps disposal in your state, go to the FDA’s website at [www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal](http://www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal).

## **Sharps Safety**

- NEVER throw sharps loosely in household trash. Always throw away in a sharps container.
- Do not let your container get too full.
- Needles, syringes, or lancets are one-time use items. Throw them away in a sharps container after one use.
- Do not put the cap back on a needle.
- Do not touch the needle.
- Do not bend or break off the needle.
- Do not take the needle off the syringe.
- Do not try to put the cap back on a needle (Picture 1, page 1).

## **When to Call the Doctor**

If anyone gets poked by a needle that was already used, call your doctor or health care provider right away. They will let you know if treatment is needed.