

Sharps Containers at Home

A 'sharp' is any medical device that could cut or stick a patient, caregiver, or anyone else. There are reasons that your child may have to use sharps while at home. It is very important to know how to throw away (dispose of) syringes, needles and any other sharp device in a safe way. By disposing of sharps in the right way, you are keeping yourself, your child, other family members and your home care worker safe.

Kinds of sharps

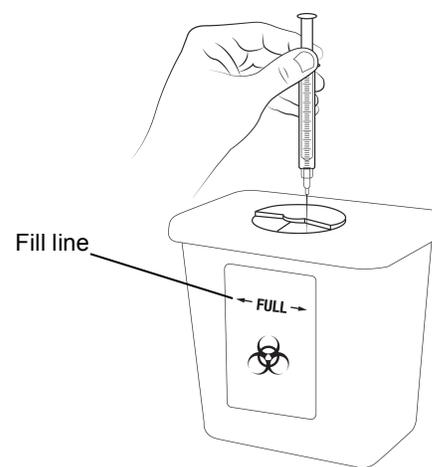
- Needles and needle connectors with attached or fixed needles
- Syringes
- Lancets
- Auto-injectors (like for insulin)

Kinds of home sharps containers

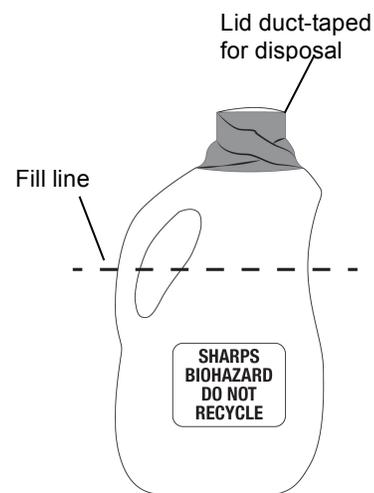
- Medical-issue sharps container (Picture 1)
- Heavy-duty plastic laundry detergent bottle (Picture 2)

How to get rid of sharps at home

1. If you do not have a hospital-issued sharps container, use a container made of heavy-duty plastic. **This can be a laundry detergent bottle or liquid laundry softener bottle.** It must close with a tight lid that screws on. Needles should not be able to poke through (puncture) the lid. The container must be leak-proof, and able to sit up and not fall over (stable).



Picture 1 Medical-issued sharps container with biohazard symbol.



Picture 2 Hard plastic laundry detergent bottle and fill line.

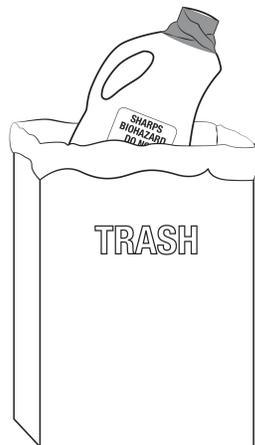
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How to get rid of sharps at home, continued

2. **DO NOT** use milk containers, water bottles, clear plastic containers, glass containers or soda cans.



3. Put the used syringe with the needle into the “sharps” container or a hard heavy-duty household plastic container. Make sure the sharp end, or the pointed end, goes into the container first and is not sticking out of the top of the container.
4. Carry a portable sharps container when traveling.
5. 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. Label the container “**SHARPS - DO NOT RECYCLE.**” Put it in the middle of a full trash bag. **In the state of Ohio**, you are allowed to put the trash bag 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. **DO NOT** put the container in the recycling or return to a store to recycle.



YES



NO

How to get rid of sharps at home, continued

6. Talk to the doctor and pharmacist when your child gets a prescription for any shot (injection). Some medicine companies have programs that let you mail back your sharps container. See http://www.epa.state.oh.us/portals/34/document/guidance/gd_462.pdf for more information.
7. Keep all syringes, needles, and sharps containers out of the reach of children and others who may misuse them.

Important to know

- Do not let your container get too full.
- Do not re-use needles, syringes or lancets.
- Do not recap the needle.
- Do not touch the needle.
- Do not bend or break off the needle.
- Do not take the needle off of the syringe.
- Do not put your hand in the sharps container **EVER**.
- For more information about safe sharps disposal in your state, go to the FDA's website at www.fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal.

When to call the doctor

- If anyone is stuck by a used needle, call your doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor should let you know if you need treatment.