

**New York:** Two New York state agencies publish the same guidance on community syringe disposal:

1. New York State Department of Health, Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP) – “Household Sharps: Dispose of Them Safely”

(<http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/aids/index.htm>)

2. New York Department of Environmental Conservation

The guidance states:

Millions of individuals with serious health conditions manage their care at home. For example, people with diabetes use syringes and needles to inject their own insulin, and lancets to test their blood glucose every day.

These syringes, needles and lancets are called "household sharps." Household sharps must be properly contained and discarded to protect trash handlers and waste treatment workers against disease or injury. Careful disposal also prevents re-use of syringes that can transmit the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or hepatitis B or hepatitis C ([http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/harm\\_reduction/needles\\_syringes/sharps/directory\\_sharpscollection.htm#directory](http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/needles_syringes/sharps/directory_sharpscollection.htm#directory)). In New York State, all hospitals and nursing homes must accept household sharps. Contact local hospitals and nursing homes for days and hours of acceptance, location of sharps collection sites and type of containers that will be accepted.

Containment

Contain the used sharps safely in your own home:

- Use a puncture-resistant, plastic container with a tight-fitting screw top. A plastic soda bottle or bleach bottle will work. Some pharmacies sell small, plastic sharps disposal containers. Don't use glass because it can break. Coffee cans are not recommended because the plastic lids come off too easily and may leak.
- Label the container clearly. Write "Contains Sharps" with a waterproof marker directly on the container or on masking tape that is placed on the container.
- Put used syringes, needles or lancets immediately into your container. Screw on the top.
- Don't clip, bend or recap the syringes, needles or lancets because you could injure yourself.
- If you are away from home or there are no sharps containers available, carefully recap all syringes, needles or lancets and place them in a plastic bag to carry home or to a sharps collection site.

The person who uses the syringes, needles or lancets should place them directly into a container.

Keep the container away from children!

When the container is three-quarters full, screw on the cap tightly. Seal it with heavy-duty tape to be extra-safe.

Disposal

There are different options for getting rid of sharps. Some cities and towns have more options than others. Here are the best bets for safety, health and protection of the environment.

- Call your health care provider, pharmacy or clinic to find local hospitals or nursing homes that accept properly contained sharps for disposal. The hospital or nursing home receiving such containers must dispose of the sharps properly.
- Ask your diabetes educator or local American Diabetes Association chapter about

sharps collection programs in your area.

- Call your local public works department or trash collector. (Check the blue pages of the telephone book for their numbers.) Some communities have special household medical waste collection or drop-off days.

- Call your local health department and ask for the health educator. Ask about sharps collection programs in your county.

New York State law allows disposal of household sharps with household trash. Local laws, however, may prohibit this. Consult your local public works department, sanitation department or trash collector for information about laws that apply in your area.

Do Not Put the Sharps Container out with the Recyclable Plastics.

Sharps Are Not Recyclable.