

Fact Sheet

Millions of people in the United States use household sharps—which include needles, lancets, and auto injectors—to manage their health conditions outside of a medical facility. These include allergies, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, blood clotting disorders, psoriasis, and more. Household sharps that are not safely disposed may cause injury.

Most states allow people to dispose of used household sharps in the household trash. It's as simple as 1-2-3:

1 Place used household sharps in a strong plastic container like a laundry detergent or bleach bottle.



2 When container is 75% full, seal it tightly with duct tape and label it "DO NOT RECYCLE."



3 Place the container in the regular household trash.



- Disposal regulations may differ, depending on where you live, work, or travel.
- Regulations vary from state to state and, in some cases, locality to locality. Visit SafetyIsThePoint.org for local guidance and requirements on safe household sharps disposal.
- Household sharps should never be recycled or placed loosely in the trash (before they are placed in a strong, plastic container).

There are multiple ways to dispose of used household sharps.

If your state or locality does not allow you to dispose of used sharps in the household trash, consider one of these alternatives:



Drop Box or Supervised Collection Points

Sharps users may be able to take their filled sharps container to various collection sites, which may include hospitals, health clinics, pharmacies, health departments, community organizations, police and fire stations, or medical waste facilities. Visit SafetyIsThePoint.org to find locations near you.



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Sites

Some local waste providers collect used sharps at their site. Contact them directly to learn their rules.



Mail-back Programs

Sharps users may obtain an FDA-cleared sharps container when they receive new sharps with their medication, from a healthcare professional, or at a pharmacy or online. Once filled, these containers can be placed in a shipping container and mailed to a collection site for proper disposal. This service usually requires a fee, and fees may vary depending on the size of the container.



In-home Individual Disposal Products

Sharps users may purchase a variety of products to clip off or destroy used needles and make them safe for disposal. Ask your healthcare provider for information about "needle clippers," "needle destruction devices," or "needle melting devices," and where to purchase them in your area.

