

# Home Guide for Proper Disposal of Needles and Lancets

## PROPER DISPOSAL OF SHARP ITEMS IS IMPORTANT

Each year, many people are seriously injured from contact with improperly discarded needles and lancets in household trash. Waste handlers are at the highest risk, however puncture wounds may also injure children and pets. Proper storage and disposal of sharps will protect members of your household and the general public from accidental injury, as well as prevent environmental pollution.

## TIPS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL

- Obtain a puncture-resistant plastic or metal container such as an empty detergent or bleach container with a screw-on or tightly secured lid or an empty coffee can.
- Many local pharmacies sell home sharps containers.
- Do not use clear plastic or glass containers.
- Place used lancets, needles and syringes in container.
- Drop sharps in container immediately after use.
- Dispose of syringes as one unit.
- Do not attempt to remove, bend, break or recap the needle.

## STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

- Store out of reach of children.
- Tightly seal the container when 3/4 full.
- When you are using a coffee can, reinforce the lid with heavy duct or electrical tape (you should completely cover the lid with tape to prevent punctures.)
- Contact your local public health agency for trash disposal ordinances and further instructions.

## OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

*Do not* recycle or reuse your syringes - each syringe should only be used once and discarded immediately after that.

*Do not* place the container containing sharps with your recyclable waste.

*Do not* place these containers where they may fall and spill open.

*Do not* dispose of needles or syringes in the toilet.

*Do not* dispose of needles or syringes in the trash without putting them in a container.

For information about traveling with needles, see EPA publication EPA530-F-04-004 at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/other/medical/med-home.pdf>. If you have questions, please contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-751-6439.

Adapted from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/dcs/syring.htm>

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