

Disposal of Sharps

What are sharps?

Sharps are used syringes, needles, detachable insulin pen needles, and vials left over after giving injections. If you give injections at home, you need to know how to dispose of your sharps safely and legally.

How do I dispose of my used sharps?

We recommend that you use an approved “sharps container” in the home setting (see below). Sharps can carry blood that may have germs that cause disease. In many counties/cities, it is against the law to throw away sharps in household garbage cans.

Never throw sharps loosely into the trash or flush them down the toilet.



1. Know what disposal container is acceptable.

Check with your city first, then county to see if it has sharps disposal rules. While an approved sharps container is best, some cities allow the use of makeshift containers like empty plastic detergent bottles.



2. Prepare and seal ¾ full container. Take it to an approved disposal location (see next page).

Or dispose prepared container in the household trash bin if allowed by your city.

The city of Seattle and all of Snohomish County **do not** allow any kind of sharps disposal in a trash bin.



What are sharps containers?

Sharps containers are usually red plastic containers labeled with the word “sharps” and a biohazard symbol to identify the contents as a potential danger (see photo on right). This is the safest method for collecting and storing used sharps in the home.



Where can I get a red sharps container?

Pharmacies: Check with the pharmacy where you get your child’s medicines and syringes. Many pharmacies sell sharps containers or provide them for customers. Seattle Children’s Ocean and Forest Outpatient Pharmacies have sharps containers for patients picking up needles or syringes for the first time.

Internet: Check sharpsdisposal.com or search the web for mail-back programs that provide sharps containers and pick-up service for a small fee.

Your health care provider: Ask your child’s healthcare provider where to get one and where to dispose of a full container.

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To Learn More

- Ocean Pharmacy
206-987-2138
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

How do I prepare my container for disposal?

- Follow all directions on the official sharps container to close and seal it. If you are using a makeshift container (empty liquid laundry detergent jug), be sure to tape the lid securely.
- Label any makeshift container with the big words “sharps” or “biohazard.”

Locations for sharps disposal stations in Washington state

Every city/county has different options for sharps disposal. You will need to find out what options are offered in your city. For more information on safe needle disposal around the U.S., visit safeneedledisposal.org. Enter your zip code to find your disposal options and drop off sites.

City of Seattle Solid Waste Recycle and Disposal Information Line 206-684-8400

- Seattle Sharps Collection Program drop sites
seattle.gov/utilities/protecting-our-environment/safe-and-clean-seattle/sharps-collection
- North Recycling and Disposal Station - 1350 North 34th Street
(Located in the Fremont/Wallingford area)
- South Recycling and Disposal Station - 130 South Kenyon Street

King County Public Health

- Needle Exchange Program 206-263-2000
- Safe and legal disposal of sharps
kingcounty.gov/sharps

Snohomish County Solid Waste Management Sharps Disposal

No disposal service through the county garbage pick-up or transfer stations. Go to safeneedledisposal.org/states/Washington/ Enter your zip code for a list of drop off pharmacies.

For other counties' sharps disposal sites, see the Washington State Health Department website:

Click on your county to find your local health department (jurisdiction):
doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions

Use the keywords: sharps disposal, needle exchange programs, biohazard waste disposal, safe needle disposal, metro[city].gov, recycling and disposal stations.