

Guidelines for Disposal of Sharp Medical Supplies (Sharps)



BC Cancer Agency

CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

This handout is for patients getting injectable medications at home. It supports the patient, their family members, and the caregivers and will help safely dispose of sharp medical supplies. Safe disposal protects you and others from being hurt or contacting cancer medications or blood products.

What are sharps?

Sharps are needles, syringes with needles attached, lancets, or any other item that could poke, pierce, or cut skin.



How should sharps be discarded?

All sharp medical supplies should be discarded into a sharps disposal container

- Cover used needles with the safety guard needle cover (if available)
- For used needles without safety guard needle covers, do not put the caps back onto the needles
- Used needles should be left attached to syringes when discarded
- Sharps used to administer cancer drugs with a hazardous label must be discarded into sharps containers labelled as CYTOTOXIC or HAZARDOUS or CHEMOTHERAPY
- Sharps used during administration of other drugs may be discarded into a regular sharps container
- Sharp medical supplies must be put into the sharps container immediately, as soon as you have finished using them
- Permanently close the lid of the sharps container when it is about two-thirds (2/3) full

Where to get a sharps container?

- May be given out by a health care provider at the cancer centre or other healthcare facility
- Buy a sharps container from a retail pharmacy or medical supply store

Where to take the sharps container for disposal?

- Give the sharps container to the cancer centre pharmacy or treatment unit staff for disposal if instructed to do so
- Take the sharps container to a retail pharmacy or medical supply store that will accept the used sharps containers for disposal. Some pharmacies offer a "needle take back program"

Do not put sharps containers into regular household garbage