

# HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE



*Each day, up to 700,000 syringes, needles and lancets (sharps) are used in New Jersey homes*

Home generated medical waste includes used sharps as a result of medical care in the home through self-administration practices or by another person not receiving money for their services (not a paid medical professional). The most common disease that requires the use of sharps at home is diabetes. The proper disposal of home generated medical waste is an important step to help ensure the health and safety of everyone in your home and community.

The improper disposal of home generated medical waste poses a potential health hazard from accidental needle sticks. Loose syringes thrown into household trash can be misused if they fall into the wrong hands. Improperly disposed needles can injure small children, pets and wildlife.

## **HOW CAN YOU SAFELY DISPOSE OF YOUR SYRINGES?**



### **Safe Syringe Disposal Program**

Participating hospitals offer free rigid containers to dispose of sharps to individuals who are injection dependent. This program does not require needles to be clipped prior to placing them in the container. Return the full container to the hospital for proper disposal and to be exchanged for a new empty container.

- Capital Health System (Hopewell)  
609-303-4184/4185 (Environmental Services)
- Princeton HealthCare System at Plainsboro (lower level)  
609-853-6140 (Environmental Services)
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (Hamilton)  
Hospital will not provide empty or exchange full sharps container. Bring used sharps in rigid container (see below) to Reception desk in Lobby - attendant will call Environmental Services  
609-586-7900 (main number)

## Disposal in Household Trash



- **Place sharps in a rigid container.** Use a container with a screw-on cap such as an empty laundry detergent bottle, bleach bottle or 2 liter soda bottle. The heavier laundry detergent and bleach bottles are preferred to the soda bottle. Do not use a clear container. You can also see if your pharmacy sells commercial containers that are designed to hold sharps for disposal in your household trash.
- Do **NOT** try to remove, bend, break or recap needles used by another person. This can lead to accidental needle sticks, which may cause serious infections.
- **Place a large warning label on the container with a permanent marker** such as CAUTION - SYRINGES/NEEDLES. DO NOT RECYCLE! This helps to ensure the container is not accidentally mingled in with recyclable materials.



- **Fill the container** with medical sharps until it is only about 3/4 full. Do not overstuff as this can increase pressure on the lid and cause a release of the medical sharps.
- While waiting for a full container, keep it out of the reach of children and pets. Always wash your hands after handling or touching medical sharps.
- After the container is full, **seal the bottle** with the original cap and wrap duct or electrical tape over the cap.
- **Dispose** of the sealed, full container with your household trash. **DO NOT** place the container in the recycling bin.

### ***FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***

- New Jersey Department of Health - Public Health Sanitation and Safety Program  
(609) 826-4941  
[www.state.nj.us/health/phss](http://www.state.nj.us/health/phss)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency - Region 2  
(877) 251-4575  
[www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/med-home.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/med-home.pdf)

**WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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