



Needles and syringes from a household or other place of lodging, such as a motel or hotel, are not considered medical waste. But they should be disposed of with care. If you generate needle waste in your household, you can either:

- Follow the general practices recommended for disposal in this document.

OR

- Take your properly containerized needles and syringes to an authorized facility for treating medical waste. (To locate a facility in your area that accepts household needles and syringes, visit www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/medwastetreatment. Be sure to contact the facility before taking your waste there.)

For your safety and that of your family, as well as that of custodial and sanitation workers, we strongly encourage you to follow these recommendations when disposing of needles, also known as “sharps.” Always exercise caution when handling sharps of any kind. You should also be aware that syringes, needles, and lancets are not recyclable: do not put them in a recycling bin.

Disposing of Syringes from Households: Do's and Don'ts

Protect Yourself, Protect Others: Please Dispose of Needles Properly

Safe Needle Disposal Is Easy

Do's

- Place needles and syringes in a hard plastic or metal container with a tightly secured lid. (The container should be labeled “Syringes,” “Sharps,” or “Needles.”)
- Keep the container out of the reach of children and pets.
- When the container is full, seal and reinforce its lid with heavy-duty tape.
- Dispose of the sealed container in the household trash.

MAKE YOUR OWN SHARPS CONTAINER

- A laundry-detergent or bleach bottle can serve as a good needle-disposal container.
- Be sure that it's not a see-through container.
- Label the container “Syringes,” “Sharps,” or “Needles.”

Don'ts

- Don't use containers made of glass or clear plastic.
- Don't use thin plastics, such as soda bottles, as they are easily pierced.
- Don't put the container in the recycling bin.
- Don't throw loose needles or syringes in your household garbage.

REMEMBER:

- The thicker the wall, the safer the container.
- Never throw loose needles in the garbage. Loose or protruding needles are a danger to everyone, especially trash collectors, because they can cause accidental needlestick injuries that may require, at a minimum, testing for HIV and hepatitis.
- Health-care professionals who provide in-home care must take sharps back to their clinics, hospitals, or places of business to be managed as medical waste. More information regarding medical waste is available at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/medicalwaste.