

PROPER DISPOSAL OF SHARPS

GSFC Health Unit Offers Disposal Option



Safely Using Sharps (Needles and Syringes) at Home, at Work and on Travel

“Sharps” is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. They may be used at home, at work, and while traveling to manage the medical conditions of people

Examples of sharps include:

Needles – Hollow needles used to inject drugs (medication) under the skin.

Syringes – Devices used to inject medication into or withdraw fluid from the body.

Lancets (also called “fingerstick” devices) – Instruments with a short, two-edged blade used to get drops of blood for testing. Lancets are commonly used in the treatment of diabetes.

Auto Injectors (Including epinephrine and insulin pens) – Syringes pre-filled with fluid medication designed to be self-injected into the body.

Infusion sets – tubing systems with a needle used to deliver drugs to the body.

Connection needles/sets – needles that connect to a tube used to transfer fluids in and out of the body. This is generally used for patients on home hemodialysis.

How to Dispose of Sharps

Used sharps should be immediately placed in a sharps disposal container. FDA-cleared sharps containers are generally available through pharmacies, medical supply companies, health care providers and online. These containers are made of puncture-resistant plastic with leak-resistant sides and bottom. They also have a tight fitting, puncture-resistant lid.

Importance of Safe Sharps Disposal

Used needles and other sharps are dangerous to people and pets if not disposed of safely because they can injure people and spread infections that cause serious health conditions. Safe sharps disposal is important whether you are at home, at work, at school, traveling, or in other public places such as hotels, parks, and restaurants.

Never place loose needles and other sharps (those that are not placed in a sharps disposal container) in the household or public trash cans or recycling bins, and never flush them down the toilet. This puts trash and sewage workers, janitors, housekeepers, household members, and children at risk of being harmed.



**WE DO NOT ACCEPT
OPEN NEEDLES OR ANY RAZORS**

Disposal of Sharps are Welcome at GSFC Health Units for GSFC Employees

Greenbelt Health Unit:

Dispose Sharps Monday through Friday
8:00am to 10:00am or 1:00pm to 2:00pm

Wallops Health Unit:

Dispose Sharps Monday through Friday
8:00am to 4:30pm

Do's and Dont's Must be Adhered to Prior to Disposal

Do's of Proper Sharps Disposal

- **Do** immediately place used needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle sticks, cuts or punctures from loose sharps.
- **Do** use an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container, if possible. If an FDA-cleared container is not available, using a heavy-duty plastic household container as an alternative.
- **Do** make sure that if a household container is used, it has the basic features of a good disposal container.
- **Do** ask your health care provider, veterinarian, local hospital or pharmacist
- **Do** seal sharps disposal containers

Dont's of Proper Sharps Disposal

- **Don't** throw loose needles and other sharps into the trash.
- **Don't** flush needles and other sharps down the toilet.
- **Don't** put needles and other sharps in your recycling bin -- they are not recyclable.
- **Don't** try to remove, bend, break, or recap needles used by another person. This can lead to accidental needle sticks, which may cause serious infections.
- **Don't** attempt to remove the needle without a needle clipper because the needle could fall, fly off, or get lost and injure someone.

THE GSFC SHARPS PROGRAM COLLECTS SHARPS USED ONLY AT WORK

**Greenbelt Health Unit: Building 97
Phone: 301-286-6666**

**Wallops Health Unit: Building F-160
Phone: 757-824-1266**