VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

How to Discard Syringes and Other Sharps

Syringes, needles, lancets and other sharp items used to treat diabetes, allergies and other medical conditions are called sharps. Syringes and needles are also used to inject drugs of abuse. Sharps can be found where you don't expect them – in a house, in a park, or on the street.

Why should I care about sharps?

Diseases like hepatitis B & C and HIV can be spread by being stuck with a sharp that was used by someone else.

What if I find a sharp?

- Wear heavy-duty gloves.
- Use a tool like tongs or pliers to pick up the sharp and put it into a heavy-duty plastic container.
- **DO NOT** disconnect the needle from the syringe. Put the whole thing, needle end down, into the container.
- **DO NOT** handle sharps with bare hands**.**
- **DO NOT** throw sharps into the trash or the toilet.
- Teach children to tell an adult if they see needles. Warn children not to pick up needles or other sharp objects.

How should I get rid of sharps?

Choose a Container

- Use a heavy-duty laundry detergent or bleach container with a screw top, or a container specially made for sharps. Look for the mark #2 HDPE on the bottom to make sure the plastic container you use is strong enough.
- **DO NOT** use soda or water bottles.
- Carefully put used sharps in the container with the needle end down.

Label & Store

- Label the container with the warning: DO NOT RECYCLE!
- **DO NOT** fill the container full. Leave a couple of inches of space at the top.
- Store the bottle out of reach of children and pets.

Seal & Dispose

- When the container is ready for disposal, screw the cap on tightly and cover the top with strong tape, like duct tape.
- Dispose of the container with household trash.
- **DO NOT** put this container in recycling.

What should I do if I get stuck?

- Stop what you are doing.
- Let the wound bleed.
- Wash with soap and running water.
- Apply antiseptic and/or bandage.
- Note the time of the injury, the needle's location and what it looked like. Was it dirty?

You may need a blood test or vaccine. Go to an emergency room or urgent care center right away.

Can't we just have the needle tested?

No, testing needles has not been determined to be helpful.

For additional information check: http://www.cdc.gov/needledisposal/vt/index.htm