

SHARP OBJECT DISPOSAL

You can help prevent injury, illness, and pollution by following some simple steps when you dispose of the sharp objects and contaminated materials you use in administering health care in your home. You should place:

- Needles
- Syringes
- Lancets
- Other sharp objects

*in a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on or tightly secured lid. **Containers with sharps are not recyclable.***

Many containers found in the household will do, or you may purchase containers specifically designed for the disposal of medical waste sharps. Before discarding a container, be sure to reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape. **Do not put sharp objects in any container you plan to recycle or return to a store, and do not use glass or clear plastic containers. Finally, make sure that you keep all containers with sharp objects out of reach of children and pets.** We also recommend that the following items be placed in securely fastened plastic bags before you put them in the garbage can with your other trash:

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- Soiled bandages
- Disposable sheets
- Medical gloves.

Preventing Injury and Pollution

The EPA promotes all recycling activities, and therefore encourages you to discard medical waste sharps in sturdy, non-recyclable containers, when possible. If a recyclable container is used to dispose of medical waste sharps, make sure that you don't mix the container with other materials to be recycled. Since the sharps impair a container's recyclability, a container holding your medical waste sharps properly belongs with the regular household trash. You may even want to label the container, "**NOT FOR RECYCLING.**" These steps go a long way toward protecting workers and other from possible injury. Although disposing of recyclable containers removes them from the recycling stream, the expected impact is minimal.

Your state or community environment programs may have other requirements or suggestions for disposing of your medical waste. Please ask your nurse if you have any question about disposal of the sharp objects and contaminated materials used in your health care at home.