



Internal Medicine For Pet Parents

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Sharps Use at Home

Sharps is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. They may be used at home to manage the medical conditions of pets, including kidney disease, diabetes, vitamin deficiency, and a few other medical conditions.

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.

Best Way to Get Rid of Used Needles and Other Sharps

The FDA recommends a two-step process for properly disposing of used needles and other sharps.

Step 1: Place all needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used.

This will reduce the risk of needle sticks, cuts, and punctures from loose sharps. Sharps disposal containers should be kept out of reach of children and pets.

Note: Overfilling a sharps disposal container increases the risk of accidental needle-stick injury. When your sharps disposal container is about three-quarters (3/4) full, follow your community guidelines for getting rid of the container (Step 2, below).

DO NOT reuse sharps disposal containers.

Step 2: Dispose of used sharps disposal containers according to your community guidelines.

Sharps disposal guidelines and programs vary depending on where you live. Check with your local trash removal services or health department (listed in the city or county government (blue) pages in your phone book) to see which of the following disposal methods are available in your area:

Drop Box or Supervised Collection Sites

You may be able to drop off your sharps disposal containers at appropriate chosen collection sites, such as doctors' offices, hospitals, pharmacies, health departments,



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medical waste facilities, and police or fire stations. Services may be free or have a nominal fee.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Sites

You may be able to drop off your sharps disposal containers at local public household hazardous waste collection sites. These are sites that also commonly accept hazardous materials such as household cleaners, paints and motor oil.

Mail-Back Programs

You may be able to mail certain FDA-cleared sharps disposal containers to a collection site for proper disposal, usually for a fee. Fees vary, depending on the size of the container. Follow the container manufacturer's instructions because mail-back programs may have specific requirements on how to label sharps disposal containers.

Residential Special Waste Pick-Up Services

Your community may provide special waste pick-up services that send trained special waste handlers to collect sharps disposal containers from your home. These services are typically fee-based and many have special requirements for the types of containers they will collect. Some programs require customers to call and request pick-ups, while other offer regular pick-up schedules.

For more information specific to your state, call Safe Needle Disposal at 1-800-643-1643 or e-mail info@safeneedledisposal.org. Information they can provide for your state includes:

- types of sharps containers that can be used,
- disposal programs in your area,
- how to label your sharps disposal containers,
- how to secure the lid of your sharps disposal container, and
- whether sharps disposal containers can be thrown away in the common trash.

Safely Using Sharps (Needles and Syringes) at Home, at Work and on Travel. FDA U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Retrieved on 6/25/18 from:

<https://www.fda.gov/medicaldevices/productsandmedicalprocedures/homehealthandconsumer/consumerproducts/sharps/default.htm>