

# SAFE SYRINGE DISPOSAL GUIDE FOR HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE



## ***INTRODUCTION***

Home generated medical waste may account for the use of up to 700,000 sharps daily in New Jersey. The most common disease that requires self-injection of insulin and lancets to monitor blood sugar levels at home is diabetes. Data for 2000-2002 indicates that there are approximately 24,000 individuals over the age of 18 who have been diagnosed as diabetic in the State of New Jersey. (*NJDOH Statistics*) Further, it is estimated that an additional 134,000 individuals in the same age group have diabetes but have yet to be diagnosed. (*NJDOH*)

The proper disposal of home generated medical waste is an important step that all home generators of medical waste can take to help ensure the health and safety of all New Jerseyans.

## ***HOW CAN YOU SAFELY DISPOSE OF YOUR SYRINGES?***

Several options are available to safely dispose of used syringes generated in the home.

**Safe Syringe Disposal Program:** The New Jersey Hospital Association together with local hospitals offer a program to safely and responsibly dispose of syringes, needles and lancets generated in the home. Participating hospitals offer rigid containers to dispose of these items for a small one-time fee to individuals who are injection dependent. (This program does not require needles to be clipped prior to placing them in the container). The container must be returned to the hospital when full for proper disposal and will be exchanged for a new empty container at that time.

### Participating Hospitals:

- Virtua Memorial Hospital of Burlington County  
Mount Holly, NJ (609-267-0700)  
\$10 one-time fee (for disposal container)  
Must use hospital issued container  
Drop off: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

- Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County  
Professional Building East  
Suite 100  
Willingboro, NJ (609-835-5809)  
\$10 one-time fee (for disposal container)  
Drop off: Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Wed 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Physicians:** Ask your physician if she/he will take your used syringes once they are properly placed in a container.

### **As a last resort...**

**Household Waste:** Follow these steps to safely dispose of your syringes. Your syringes must be placed in rigid containers that will protect people from needle sticks and use containers that are unlikely to break open on its way to the landfill.

#### **Container Don'ts**

1. **Don't** use glass containers (they can break), or lightweight plastic containers.
2. **Don't** use any container that will be returned to a store.
3. If you use a recyclable container to dispose of syringes and lancets, be sure it doesn't end up in the recycling bin by mistake. These items are not recyclable, and could affect the safe and effective recycling of other items in the bin.

#### **Container Do's**

**1. Use a Rigid Container:** You may use an empty plastic bleach jug, plastic liquid detergent bottle, plastic milk jug, or other rigid containers with screw-on caps to dispose of needles and syringes. Check with a pharmacy. Ask if it sells commercial containers specially designed to hold sharps for disposal in your household trash.

**2. Use Label/Warning:** Place a large label with a warning on the empty container.

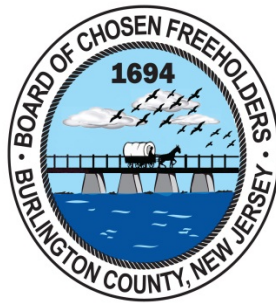
**Example: SYRINGES - DO NOT RECYCLE**

**3. Clip the needle.** You can buy an inexpensive hand held needle clipper from the pharmacy. **Using anything other than a clipper to break a needle is not safe.** After clipping the needle, carefully place each of your used needles and syringes into a plastic bottle with a screw-on lid. To the extent practicable, the individual receiving the medical treatment should clip the needle and syringe and place them in the container. In cases where this cannot be done due to the

limitations of that individual, and a family care giver or volunteer must perform this activity, it is recommended that the individual's physician be consulted first.

**4. Seal:** Seal the bottle tightly with its original lid and wrap duct tape over the lid after you fill the bottle with syringes.

**5. Dispose:** You may now dispose of the tightly sealed full container of syringes in your household garbage - **NOT** in your recycling bin. Remember, although you may feel healthy, your used syringes can transmit germs. In addition, loose syringes thrown in your trash can seriously hurt people. We all benefit from the safe disposal of syringes. Please do your part to help keep our environment clean and safe.



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