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# **INSULIN SYRINGES AND LANCETS**

Reuse of insulin syringes and disposal of sharps containers

# Blood and body fluid precautions

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Sharps can harm people and animals when discarded improperly. Placing needles and other sharps in the trash exposes garbage haulers and other disposal workers to potential injury. And it can transmit diseases.

## Safety precautions

- Do not share needles or lancing devices.
- Handle only your own equipment.
- Dispose of your own lancet and syringe in a medical waste container.
- Some public restrooms now have medical waste containers.
- Do not reach into a medical waste container.

## Household medical waste

Most communities have laws that require you to put all sharps (syringes, pen needles, and lancets) into a protected container for disposal. These are called “sharps containers.”

Some states only require that you dispose of your sharps in a puncture-proof container such as a used bleach bottle or liquid detergent bottle. Be sure you know the regulations in your community.

Most pharmacies, medical supply stores, and some waste-management companies sell sharps containers. Sharps containers are hard-sided, usually red, marked with an easily visible, yellow biohazard label, and have a locking top.

Not all pharmacies accept full containers back for disposal. Some waste-management companies will accept full containers back. Call your pharmacy or waste management company for more information.

It is important to use a protected container because:

- It reduces the risk of injury or infection for family members, sanitation workers, or community members. Pets and wildlife can also be put at risk.
- Accidental needle sticks can cause injury or infection.
- Loose syringes in your household trash can be misused.



# Household medical waste – Oregon

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## Safe disposal of household medical sharps

### Throwing sharps in the trash is illegal.

You cannot throw syringes and other medical sharps in the garbage. The law requires that medical sharps be disposed of in an approved sharps container. The containers are available at many pharmacies, medical supply stores, and Metro's hazardous waste facilities.

### Metro's container exchange program

Metro's container exchange program is only for residents and households in **Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties**.

Metro has household medical waste "collection events" from March through November. The schedule is at [oregonmetro.gov/roundups](http://oregonmetro.gov/roundups).

For information about Multnomah County sharps disposal drop boxes, go to [oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/healthy-home/common-hazardous-products/medical-waste-or-sharps](http://oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/healthy-home/common-hazardous-products/medical-waste-or-sharps) or call 503-234-3000.

Other counties do not have this container exchange program. Contact your garbage hauler for options.

## Other disposal

Some pharmacies, garbage haulers, and recycling collection companies provide sharps disposal for a fee. Contact your hauler, check Metro's online database, or ask Metro about safe disposal options near you.

For information on disposal options, contact:

- Safe Needle disposal  
1-800-643-1643  
[safeneedledisposal.org](http://safeneedledisposal.org)
- Metro Central Transfer Station  
6161 NW 61<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97210  
503-234-3000  
[oregonmetro.gov/recycling](http://oregonmetro.gov/recycling)
- Metro South Transfer Station  
2001 Washington St.  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
503-234-3000  
[oregonmetro.gov/recycling](http://oregonmetro.gov/recycling)
- Marion County Department of Solid Waste Management  
503-588-5169  
[co.marion.or.us/PW/ES/disposal](http://co.marion.or.us/PW/ES/disposal)  
or contact your garbage hauler company
- Mid-Valley Garbage & Recycling Association (Salem area)  
503-390-4006  
[mrtrashrecycles.com](http://mrtrashrecycles.com)
- Lane County Waste Management  
3100 E 17th Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97403  
541-682-4120  
[lanecounty.org/HazWaste](http://lanecounty.org/HazWaste)

# Household medical waste – Washington

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Washington state law requires disposal of needles, lancets, and other sharps waste in an easily identified, clear plastic, protected container. It must be kept separate from the regular solid-waste stream.

Proper disposal of the containers varies according to local jurisdiction. Check with residential-waste haulers or city, county, or other municipal agencies for more information.

Waste haulers offering sharps disposal are required by law to notify the public in writing that this service is available. They also must describe the cost and other details.

Some Vancouver waste is hauled to Oregon. It is subject to Oregon state law, which requires that all sharps (insulin syringes, lancets, etc.) must be placed in a leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant, red, sealed container.

Sharps containers meeting the requirements of Washington (and Oregon) state law can be purchased at Kaiser Permanente pharmacies, and most drug and medical supply stores.

Certain waste-management or waste-hauling companies provide approved containers. Call your county health department or your residential waste-hauling company for more information.

Kaiser Permanente medical facilities cannot accept used sharps or sharps containers.

For information on disposal options, contact:

- Safe Needle disposal  
1-800-643-1643  
**safeneedledisposal.org**
- Clark County  
564-397-2000  
**clark.wa.gov/public-health/recycling-z**
- Central Transfer and Recycling Center  
11034 NE 117<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Vancouver, WA 98660  
360-256-8482  
**columbiareourcecompany.com**
- West Vancouver Materials  
Recovery Center  
6601 NW Old Lower River Road  
Vancouver, WA 98660  
360-737-1727
- Washougal Transfer Station  
4020 S Grant St.  
Washougal, WA 98660  
360-835-2500
- Waste Control Transfer Station  
1150 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Longview, WA 98632  
360-425-4302  
**wastecontrolrecycling.com**

# Can I reuse my insulin syringes?

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## Can I reuse my insulin syringes?

Syringe manufacturers recommend using syringes one time only. Using syringes more than once may carry a risk of infection for people with poor immune function.

## If you choose to reuse syringes

The American Diabetes Association suggests:

- If you are ill, have open wounds on your hands, or have poor resistance to infection, do not reuse syringes.
- Never share syringes or insulin bottles with another person, due to risk of blood-borne infections.
- Inspect injection sites for signs of infection: redness, swelling, warmth, drainage.
- Seek medical care if you suspect an infection.
- Never let the needle touch anything but clean skin and the top of the insulin vial.
- Carefully recap syringes between use.
- Don't clean the needle with alcohol. This may remove the silicone coating on the needle, which helps make the needle more comfortable to use.
- Do not reuse syringes if you are mixing insulins.
- Discard any needle that is bent, dull, or contaminated.
- Follow your local sharps disposal or household medical-waste disposal regulations.