

Disposal of Needles and Sharps: A Household Guide for Arkansans



What is a sharp?

Sharps are devices that can puncture or cut skin. They may be used at home, work, or while traveling to manage some medical conditions.

Medical conditions may include allergies, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, blood clotting disorders, and psoriasis.

Sharps include:

Needles, syringes, lancets, auto injectors such as epi and insulin pens, infusion sets, and connection needles/sets used in home dialysis.



DOs and DON'Ts of Needles and Sharps

- ✓ DO keep all sharps and sharps disposal containers out of reach of children and pets.
- ✓ DO use plastic cap or protector to cover sharps if available.
- ✓ DO close sharps containers when disposing them.
- ✓ DO label sharps containers properly.

- ✗ DON'T throw loose needles or sharps in the trash.
- ✗ DON'T put needles or sharps in your recycling bin.
- ✗ DON'T flush needles or sharps down the toilet.

Adapted from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Dos and Don'ts of Proper Sharps Disposal

3 Steps to Safely Dispose of Household Sharps



1. Accumulate

Use a thick plastic, puncture-proof container, such as an empty bleach bottle or laundry soap container to store your used sharps. Make sure the container has a lid and closes tightly. Place used sharps in the container until it is about 2/3 full.



2. Disinfect

Mix a bleach and water solution using 1 part bleach and 10 parts water (1:10) and pour into the puncture-proof container. Let soak for at least 10 minutes. After soaking, pour the bleach and water solution from the container into a sink drain or toilet.



3. Dispose

Put the lid on the puncture-proof container and close tightly. Put the closed container in the 2 trash bags (double bagged). Tie the bags. Place the bags in your regular trash.

You will need 4 items:

- 1) Plastic, puncture-proof container with tight-fitting lid, such as an empty bleach bottle or laundry soap container,
- 2) household bleach,
- 3) water,
- 4) two trash bags (any kind)



For more information, contact the Arkansas Department of Health Medical Waste Coordinator at 501-661-2621, or email adh.epi.mw@arkansas.gov.