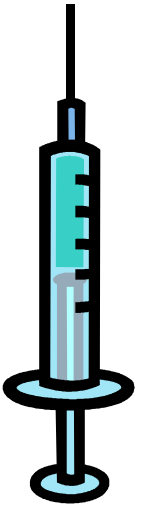
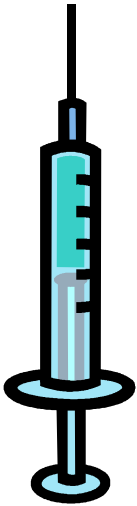


Missing the Point

How to Properly Dispose of Your Medical Sharps



OUCH! Imagine the unpleasant surprise of picking up the trash and getting jabbed by a hidden needle buried somewhere in the garbage bag's contents. Not a pleasant prospect, and, under the rules of proper disposal, an accident which need not happen. Used needles and syringes are considered biomedical waste and must be treated with caution. Institutions like hospitals and blood clinics must follow strict guidelines when they discard their needles or sharps. However, even individuals should take precautions when disposing of their own used syringes, lancets, or even razor blades. Anything that may have come into contact with human body fluids like blood should be treated with care. The risk is often not to you, but to some other unsuspecting person who has to handle your garbage. The recommended method to dispose of waste sharps at home is as follows:

1. Use a container that is leak and puncture proof with a twist off cap. Old detergent bottles or peanut butter jars are good choices.
2. After dropping in your used syringes, tightly cap the bottle, duct tape the cap on and LABEL it with appropriate wording like: **WASTE SHARPS.**
3. Take your bottle of sharps to a hospital. The hospital will not charge you for this service.
4. Hospitals who accept waste sharps include Indianhead Medical Center in Shell Lake, Spooner Health System in Spooner, and Burnett Medical Center in Grantsburg.