

Sharps Disposal



- Do not** place sharps in a recyclable plastic or glass container and send them to a recycling center.
- Do not** let small children handle or play with sharps containers.
- Do not** flush needles, syringes, and lancets down the toilet.
- Do not** discard needles or lancets in the hotel, airline, or cruise line trash when traveling. Ask if a sharps container is available or package the used sharps in a puncture resistant container and bring them home with you for proper disposal.

Health officials estimate nearly 30 million Americans have diabetes. Diabetics use syringes, needles, and lancets to administer home health care. In addition, many patients with cancer, arthritis, and other chronic diseases generate sharps as a medical waste with their self-administered home health care.

These “sharps,” if not disposed of in puncture-resistant containers, can:

- Injure waste haulers
- Increase the risk of infection
- Pollute our environment

Notice: Under Michigan’s littering law, it is illegal for a person to dispose of sharps improperly. (MCL 324.8905[2])

Home owners who produce medical waste can help prevent injury, infection, and pollution by following these simple steps:



- Contact local health department county waste authority, or household hazardous waste collection program to see if they will collect sharps for safe and proper disposal. Also check the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Medical Waste Regulatory Program’s website where a list of community service collection programs is maintained by county. The website can be found at www.michigan.gov/deqmedwaste .
- Identify a pharmacy, physician, dentist, veterinarian, health clinic, or a hospital that will accept sharps and will properly dispose of them with their sharps.
- Contact a medical waste collection company and see if they will accept sharps waste. A list of collection companies can be found on the Medical Waste Regulatory Program’s web site listed above.
- Contract with a U.S. Postal Service approved mail-back service. These companies will provide containers and directions on packaging sharps waste so they can be returned to the company through the U.S. mail. A list of these companies can be obtained from the Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal at (800) 643-1643 or visit the web site at www.safeneedledisposal.org.
- Purchase a product that allows destruction of needles at home by burning, melting, or cutting off the needle, making it safe to throw in the garbage. Obtain a list of companies that make home needle destruction devices from the Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal, phone number listed above.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs
CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov