

Be Careful with Needles

Are you a user of needles and/or syringes? Do you sometimes find needles in public areas?

If you answer yes to any of these questions this fact sheet will help you.

If you find a discarded needle or syringe on your property or if you are a user, the following steps should be taken:

- Place used sharps in a plastic or metal container with a tightly secured lid. Examples of possible containers are 2 litre pop bottles, heavy-duty plastic containers, or coffee containers.
- Do not switch the needle or syringe from one container to the other.
- Do not put needles and syringes in household garbage. Sharps are not to be placed in tin cans, plastic bottles or milk jugs that go through recycling or the regular garbage—a needle in the garbage or recycling bin may cause major problems with needle stick injuries and can contaminate the whole recycling process.

Why is it important to put needles and syringes in proper containers?

- To prevent easy detection by those who may abuse the contents
- To prevent accidental injury to those who may come in contact i.e. children, family members, and friends

Why is it important not to place containers with used needles and syringes in recycling bin (blue box) or out with your regular garbage (garbage bags)?

- Because containers may break open leaving needle exposed to cause injury to persons who sort recycling materials
- Because persons getting injured with a needle may face health concerns

What are the health issues regarding needle sticks?

- Used needles can transmit blood borne diseases such as AIDS and Hepatitis B. It may also transmit Tetanus (Lockjaw).
- Even if users of sharps do not have any blood borne disorders, you must follow the correct disposal methods.

Another person getting stuck with your used needle will suffer anxiety of developing a life threatening illness. In addition, that person will still have to seek medical attention which can be costly.

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