
INSULIN SYRINGES AND LANCETS

Reuse of insulin syringes and disposal of sharps containers

Household medical waste – Oregon

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**.

You can enroll at a Metro hazardous waste facility for a small one-time fee, and get a new sharps container at no cost each time you bring a full one back for disposal.

A \$5 hazardous waste fee is charged if you return 2 or more containers at one time. This fee is waived if you return only 1 container. The addresses are listed to the right.

Metro has household medical waste "collection events" from March through November. The schedule is at oregonmetro.gov/roundups.

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:

- Metro Central Transfer Station
6161 NW 61st Ave.
Portland, OR 97210
503-234-3000
oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=582
- Metro South Transfer Station
2001 Washington St.
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-234-3000
oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=582
- Marion County Department of Solid Waste Management
503-588-5169, select option "0"
co.marion.or.us/PW/ES/disposal/Pages/hmw.aspx
or contact your garbage hauler company
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
1-800-732-9253
oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup/hw/Pages/Infectious-Waste.aspx

Household medical waste – Washington

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, and to 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:

- Clark County Public Works
360-397-6118, ext. 4352
www.clark.wa.gov/recycle/A-Z/materials/sharps.html
- Central Transfer and Recycling Center
11034 NE 117th Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-256-8482
- West Vancouver Materials
Recovery Center
6601 NW Old Lower River Road
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-737-1727
- Washougal Waste Transfer
4020 S Grant St.
Washougal, WA 98660
360-835-2500
- Waste Control Transfer Station
1150 3rd Ave.
Longview, WA 98671
360-425-4302
wastecontrolrecycling.com

Can I reuse my insulin syringes?

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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.