

BASICS OF SHARPS DISPOSAL

If you find a needle, secure it using a sharps container or alternative. **DO NOT** put loose or discarded sharps in the trash, recycling or flush them down the toilet.

Sharps Container Alternatives

If you do not have a sharps container, look for these characteristics in an empty household container:

- Stays upright
- Tight fitting and puncture proof lid
- Leak proof
- Made of heavy duty plastic

Examples include bleach bottles, laundry detergent bottles and plastic cat litter containers.

Examples of what **NOT** to use:

- Soda cans
- Plastic bottles
- Milk cartons
- Cardboard boxes
- Glass bottles
- Coffee cans

SAFE SHARPS HANDLING

- DO be aware of your surroundings.
- DO take universal precautions.
- DO use gloves and tongs (whichever provides more control).
- DO bring your equipment to the location of the syringe/needle, not the other way around.
- DO NOT force sharps into full or crowded containers.
- DO NOT put fingers inside sharps containers.
- DO NOT bend, break off, recap or remove the needle.

Recommended Supplies

- Sharps container or safe alternative
- Gloves
- Tongs
- Hand sanitizer or soap and water

In the Event of a Needlestick

- Remain calm and take 2-3 deep breaths.
- Wash the area of the needlestick with warm water and soap.
- DO NOT squeeze the wound.
- Apply an antiseptic (alcohol) and cover with a Band-AID.
- Locate and present the wound at nearest hospital or urgent care for evaluation.

ARE THERE RISKS?

To date, there are NO documented cases of HIV infection through contact with a needle or syringe discarded in a public place.

The risk of acquiring any type of bloodborne infection (HBV, HCV or HIV) from a needle stick injury in the community is: **extremely low.**

What is Dangerous?

It is dangerous to limit access to new and sterile supplies for people who inject drugs.

Research from the AIDS Institute, a department of the New York State Department of Health, concluded that prevalence of HIV in people who inject drugs in New York State was 54% in 1990 and only 3% in 2012. This decline is directly tied to increasing access to Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs) across New York State.



Disposal Options and Resources

Where can I acquire sharps containers?

- Pharmacies or local drug store
- NYS Safe Sharps Collection sites (visit: health.ny.gov/sharps-collection)
- Syringe Exchange Programs (That's us! We can help!)

Where can I dispose of sharps properly?

- Hospitals and nursing homes in New York State are *required* to accept home generated sharps.
- Call those medical organizations located in your community for specific hours and protocols.
- The Point is an online syringe access and disposal map. It provides up-to-date information on locations where sharps can be dropped off and disposed of. (thepointny.org)
- Erie County Department of Health has drop-off kiosks for sharps across the county.
- Visit www.erie.gov/health to learn more about syringe access and disposal in Erie County.



Syringe Exchange Program

**206 S. Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14201
716.847.2441**

**31 Water Street, Door #14
Jamestown, NY 14701
716.541.0678**

evergreenhs.org

visit us online to learn more

Evergreen Health is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization

If you know of any "hot spot" locations in Buffalo and Jamestown where there are large numbers of discarded syringes, give us a call! We will do our best to visit the location to properly dispose of any waste.

Additional Resources

NYS Safe Sharps Collection Program
health.ny.gov/sharps-collection

NYS Department of Health HIV/AIDS Information Line
1-800-541-2437

The Point
thepointny.org

Safe Needle Disposal
<https://safeneedledisposal.org/>

North American Syringe Exchange Network
<https://www.nasen.org/>

Syringe Exchange Program



Safe Sharps Disposal Guide

for neighbors, community members and partners

Fight Stigma | Save Lives

