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Used Sharps Disposal – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Be sure to check the regulations in your local area before disposing of any sharps material.

1. What is a “sharp”?

Needles, syringes, injection devices, and lancets are all types of medical implements known “sharps.”

2. Why is it important to dispose of used sharps properly?

Disposing of your needles and sharps the wrong way can cause needle sticks and injury that may result in transmission of disease. In many countries, and in some states in the US, used sharps are a biohazard waste. That means they must be handled and thrown out separately from the household trash.

3. What type of disposal containers can I use?

Used “sharps” are placed in a sharps container. It’s a colored hard plastic container with a tight fitting lid. Sharps containers can have a biohazard label, and are often red (in the US) or yellow/purple (in Europe). A sharps container may have been given to you when you were first prescribed your Pfizer medicine. Replacement containers may be found at your local pharmacy, healthcare provider or health department. In many countries, a sharps container is prescribed by your healthcare provider, much like a medicine.

If you can’t get a sharps container, some states in the US recommend using any empty, hard plastic container with a screw-on cap like a laundry detergent bottle. The container should be clearly labeled “Used Sharps, Do Not Recycle”. Always screw on the cap tightly after each use and store it in a safe location, out of reach of children. Do not use glass or clear plastic containers, or containers with lids that can easily come off. In the US, be sure to check the rules for your state or local area before throwing out any sharps material.

4. How do I determine my local sharps disposal requirements?

Sharps disposal rules are different around the world. That’s why it is always best to talk to your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or local health department, who are familiar with the local rules and disposal options. In the US, you can also check for your local state rules at SafeNeedleDisposal.org and search by your county and state at the [Disposal Centers page](#), to find your local disposal options. For other countries, check with your local health department.

5. Can I throw the filled sharps containers in the trash?

Throwing out sharps containers in household trash is not allowed in most countries and in some states in the US. Always check with your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or local health department first. In some countries, filled sharps containers can be taken to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. In the US, you can also check your local requirements at safeneedledisposal.org.

Never throw loose needles or syringes in the trash or flush them down the toilet. Do not allow the sharps container to be recycled.

If your local area allows filled sharps containers in your household trash, first talk to your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or local health department to see if there are other, safer options like taking them to a local sharps collection center. [This US EPA brochure](#) describes some of those other options. You can also search by your county and state at SafeNeedleDisposal.org for any nearby sharps disposal options.

6. My US state does not allow disposal of used sharps in the trash, what do I do?

Talk to your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or local health department about your options. In the US, you can search by your county and state at SafeNeedleDisposal.org to find a local disposal options.

7. Did Pfizer submit a Sharps Disposal Plan to CalRecycle?

Yes, [the CalRecycle report](#) was submitted by July 1, 2010.