



VNSNY Home Care

PROCEDURE

TITLE: DISPOSAL OF NEEDLES, SYRINGES, AND SHARPS

APPLIES TO: VNSNY Home Care

PREPARED BY: Clinical Education

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the safe disposal of contaminated needles, other sharps and syringes in the appropriate container.

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Contaminated needles or other contaminated sharps *must not* be bent, broken, or re-capped.
2. All needles, syringes, lancets and other sharps must be disposed of immediately (or as soon as possible after use) in an appropriate container.
 - a. An *appropriate container* is opaque, puncture-resistant, leak-proof with a screw on top, i.e., hard plastic laundry detergent, bleach or fabric softener containers.
 - b. If a commercially-produced sharps container (i.e., a home sharps container purchased from a retail drug store), is in the home, the patient should follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper disposal.
 - c. Do not use glass or coffee cans.
 - d. Do not add any liquids to the container.
3. During use, the container should be:
 - a. Easily accessible to personnel and located in the immediate area where needles or sharps are being used
 - b. Maintained in an upright position throughout use
 - c. Replaced when $\frac{3}{4}$ full and not allowed to over-fill
 - d. Stored out of the reach of children

PROCEDURE:

1. Dispose of all needles, syringes, lancets and other sharps immediately (or as soon as possible after use) in the appropriate container.
2. Label container **Do Not Recycle** by using a permanent ink marker or writing on a piece of adhesive tape and applying to container.
3. When the container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, dispose in the following way:
 - a. Screw the top on tightly and secure the plastic lid with tape.
 - b. Discard in the regular garbage (**Do Not Recycle**).

4. Instruct patient/family and or caregiver to:
 - a. Obtain an appropriate container, as defined in this policy
 - b. Store container in the area where needles and other sharps are used
 - c. Keep container out of the reach of children
 - d. Follow disposal procedures (as listed above)

DOCUMENT IN PATIENT'S RECORD:

Instructions given to patient/family and/or caregiver; their understanding of instructions and ability to give return demonstration

STANDARDS:

REFERENCES:

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Solid Waste, Washington, DC, 2005.

<http://www.epa.gov/qrtlakes/seahome/housewaste/src/sharps.htm>

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 2005

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dshm/sldwaste/sharps.htm>

SEE ALSO: Household Waste Disposal