

SAFE DISPOSAL

of needles and drug paraphernalia



Interior Health

SAFE NEEDLE DISPOSAL

1. **Find a Rigid Container:** Use a sharps container if you have one. They are available for free at public health units. You can also use a thick plastic bottle with a lid (like a shampoo or bleach bottle). Avoid beverage containers because these have a deposit on them and people might try to recycle them.
2. **Pick Up the Needle Safely:** Wear gloves or use tongs. Pick up the needle by the middle of the syringe barrel. Do not recap the needle or break off the end. Always keep the sharp end pointed down and away from you.
3. **Dispose of the Needle:** Bring the container close to the needle. Then, place the container on the ground—do not hold it in your hand during this step. Put the needle in the container, sharp-end first, and secure the lid.
4. **Clean Up:** Remove gloves (if used) and wash your hands with soap and water.
5. **Drop Off:** Take the sealed container to a health unit, harm reduction site, pharmacy, or community drop box. While you're there, you can ask for a personal sharps container to use going forward. Remember, once a plastic bottle has syringes in it, it can't be recycled.



IF YOU ARE PRICKED BY A NEEDLE

Getting poked by a needle can be concerning. However, it is important to remember that the risk of infection from an improperly discarded needle in the community is extremely low. In the event of a needle stick injury, the following steps should be taken:

- Allow the wound to bleed freely. Do not squeeze the wound. This may damage the tissues and increase risk of infection.
- Wash the wound with soap and water. Do not apply bleach or alcohol to the wound.
- Go to your local emergency department immediately for follow-up care.

SAFE DRUG PARAPHERNALIA DISPOSAL



- Pick up supplies—such as cookers, stems or pipes using work or latex gloves.
- Place items into double plastic bags, tie-off and dispose in the garbage.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Remember, never place a needle in the garbage



Contact your
municipal office
to find a sharps
drop box in your
community