

# WHERE SHOULD YOU DISPOSE SHARPS?

Be informed, conserve space.

As demand for sharps disposal containers continues to surge due to **COVID-19 vaccinations**, waste container conservation is paramount in the effort to **reduce strain** on the healthcare supply chain.

Learn how to **properly dispose sharps** to mitigate waste container supply issues.

## 1 DON'T THROW AWAY NON-SHARPS WASTE IN SHARPS CONTAINERS



### Examples of waste that must go in a sharps waste container:

- Used needles
- Syringes used to inject medication or withdraw bodily fluids
- Lancets used for blood testing
- Auto-injectors, including epinephrine and insulin pens
- Infusion needle sets used to deliver drugs to the body
- Connection needles or sets used for patients on hemodialysis
- Scalpels, suture needles, and other sharp surgical devices

### Examples of waste that should go in a hazardous waste bag:

- Dressings, gauze, or cotton materials that are soaked or caked with blood
- Tubing containing visible blood and biohazard cleanup items

### Examples of waste that should go in a normal trash can:

- Empty IV bags, tubing and vials (check your facility policy) – **You may be able to dispose of empty IV bags and unbroken vials that did not contain chemotherapy or hazardous drugs in the regular trash**
- Diapers, pads, and sanitary napkins
- Exam table covers and patient drapes
- PPE that is not saturated with blood or other potentially infectious material
- Items soaked with urine, feces, or vomit
- Urine specimen cups
- **Avoid orienting sharps containers near sinks to prevent people throwing away paper towels into them**

### Ensure recyclables make it into the appropriate receptacles

- Consider processing and recycling endomechanical instruments

## 2 ENSURE WASTE CONTAINERS ARE FILLED TO RECOMMENDED CAPACITY

Where allowed, **avoid timed exchanges** (changing containers at set intervals regardless of fill level) that can waste empty container space.

For more information on how to reduce strain on the healthcare supply chain by properly disposing of hazardous waste material, please visit [epa.gov/hwgenerators](https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators)