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## For more information

Disposing sharps properly is not only the right thing to do, it is the law. Follow these simple guidelines and keep everyone in the community safe from needlestick injuries.

For more information and guidance on disposing animal health sharps, talk with a veterinarian or the waste management specialist in a local DNR office.

Information on the laws regarding sharps disposal and answers to basic questions on waste management are also available by contacting:

### WI Department of Natural Resources

Website: <http://dnr.wi.gov>  
(search for "Healthcare waste")

Email: [DNRMedicalWaste@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRMedicalWaste@wisconsin.gov)

Phone: (608) 266-2111

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Wisconsin laws on  
animal medical waste



Stick  
to  
the  
rules

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How to keep  
everyone safe by  
disposing of needles  
properly

Sharps (needles, syringes and lancets) are used on animals every day. For example, dairy cows receive vaccinations, and diabetic dogs and cats receive insulin injections. Although some human bloodborne pathogens are not a concern with veterinary waste, sharps that have been used on animals can still pose a human health hazard. Additionally, pharmaceutical residue remaining on sharps can be dangerous to humans who sustain an accidental needle stick injury.

## What's the danger?

When sharps are disposed of improperly, they pose an unnecessary concern to garbage haulers and employees. If someone is stuck by a needle from garbage or recyclables, they won't know if the needle was used on a human or an animal or if it carries any diseases. **All** needlestick injuries result in expensive testing and can cause long-term emotional distress for the person who was stuck by the needle because of the possibility that he or she may get a disease like HIV or Hepatitis B.



## It's the law

Wisconsin law requires everyone to dispose of sharps separately from other waste. This minimizes injuries and enables the recovery of valuable materials. When sharps are found in recyclables, whole loads of recyclables must be landfilled instead.

Sharps cannot be disposed with:

- Household waste
- Farm waste
- Recyclable materials (glass, metal, plastic containers, etc.)

## How to dispose of sharps

Safely packaging sharps used on animals for disposal involves three basic steps.

### 1. Place the sharps in rigid, puncture resistant containers with secure lids or caps.

Acceptable containers include:

- Containers specifically for sharps
- Heavy plastic detergent or bleach bottles with screw caps

Unacceptable containers include:

- Coffee cans (the lids are too easily punctured)
- Plastic milk jugs
- Plastic bags
- Pop cans or soda bottles

For containers specifically for sharps, ask a pharmacist or check with local farm supply stores for availability.

### 2. Visibly label the sharps container "Biohazard," "Infectious waste," or "Sharps."

If using a detergent bottle, it is a good idea also to label it "Do not recycle."



### 3. When the container is full or the sharps need to be disposed of, seal and label it, store it out of the reach of children, and dispose of it properly.

As long as the container is being used and it isn't full, it can be kept for an unlimited time. When disposing of the container, do not put it out with other trash. Take it to a registered sharps

collection station, or talk with a veterinarian about possible outlets for disposing of sharps. Some sharps disposal locations may charge fees for disposal.



### Locations for disposing sharps

*Before attempting to drop off sharps at a location, always call ahead and make sure they will take them and inquire if there is a fee.*

- Go to the DNR website, <http://dnr.wi.gov>.
- Search for "healthcare waste".
- Under the heading "Households" click on "Medical sharps". The link to the list is under the "collection stations" tab.
- Please note that businesses, such as livestock farms, need to follow infectious waste requirements under the heading "Non-households."

Consult the yellow pages under "waste disposal" or "medical waste" for sharps disposal locations. If transporting more than 50 pounds of medical waste per month, a license from the DNR is required. For more information, call (608) 266-2111.