

# SAFE SYRINGE DISPOSAL GUIDE FOR HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE

*If you produce any medical waste at home, this Guide may apply to you.*

2008

## **INTRODUCTION**

Home generators of medical waste may account for the use of up to 700,000 sharps daily in New Jersey. The most common disease that requires self-injection of insulin and lancets to monitor blood sugar levels at home is diabetes. Data for 2000-2002 indicates that there are approximately 24,000 individuals over the age of 18 who have been diagnosed as diabetic in the State of New Jersey. (*NJDHSS Center for Health Statistics*) Further, it is estimated that an additional 134,000 individuals in the same age group have diabetes but have yet to be diagnosed. (*NJDHSS Family Health Services*)

The proper disposal of home generated medical waste is an important step that all home generators of medical waste can take to help ensure the health and safety of all New Jerseyans.

## ***WHAT HEALTH EFFECTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE?***

The improper disposal of home generated medical waste poses a potential health hazard to many, including family members, sanitation workers, people in the community, hotel housekeeping staffs and school personnel. Although rare, diseases as serious as Hepatitis B and AIDS can also result from accidental needle sticks. In addition, loose syringes thrown into your household trash can also be misused if they fall into the wrong hands. Moreover, these items can injure small children, pets and wildlife.

## ***DOES THIS GUIDE APPLY TO YOU?***

The Safe Syringe Disposal Guide (Guide) applies to New Jerseyans generating medical waste at home. These individuals are referred to throughout this Guide as home generators of medical waste. *This Guide also applies to individuals visiting the State of New Jersey*

***E**ach day, up to 700,000 syringes, needles and lancets are used by New Jerseyans*

***WHAT IS HOME GENERATED  
MEDICAL WASTE?***

Home generated medical waste is created through the administration of injectable medications and other invasive or non-invasive procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, syringes, needles with attached tubing and other materials.

***WHO ARE HOME GENERATORS  
OF MEDICAL WASTE?***

Home generators of medical waste include any individual who produces waste as a result of medical care in the home (home self-care) through self-administration practices or by a family member or other person not receiving money for their services.

***ARE THERE LAWS GOVERNING THE  
DISPOSAL OF HOME GENERATED MEDICAL  
WASTE IN NEW JERSEY?***

**Yes.** The improper disposal of syringes or reusable hypodermic needles is regulated by State law (N.J.S.A. 2A:170-25.17). This Statute prohibits any person from discarding disposable or reusable hypodermic needles or syringes, in public or private places which are accessible to other persons (including trespassers) without first destroying the needle or syringe. This means you are responsible for destroying your needles and syringes, even when you visit other people. Violators of this Statute can be fined up to \$500.00 and/or imprisoned or both. *If visiting other states, check their laws to determine whether your medical waste is regulated and the proper disposal methods.*

***WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL WASTE GENERATED  
BY MEDICAL CARE WORKERS IN YOUR HOME?***

Medical waste produced by health care workers (physicians, nurses, home health aides, etc.) as a result of providing medical care in the home is *not* home generated medical waste. It is Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) as defined in the N.J.A.C. 7:26-3A, and must be disposed of by a licensed RMW generator in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) RMW regulations. **The responsibility for the proper and safe disposal of regulated medical waste rests with the health care professional providing services in the home.**

***HOW CAN YOU SAFELY DISPOSE OF YOUR SYRINGES?***

Several options are available to safely dispose of used syringes generated in the home.

**Safe Syringe Disposal Program** - The New Jersey Hospital Association together with local hospitals offer a program to safely and responsibly dispose of syringes, needles and lancets generated in the home. Participating hospitals offer rigid containers to dispose of these items for a small one time fee to individuals who are injection dependent. (This program does not require needles to be clipped prior to placing them in the container). The container must be returned to the hospital when full for proper disposal and will be exchanged for a new empty container at that time. A list of participating hospitals is provided at the end of this brochure.

*See End for a List of Participating Hospitals.*

**Physicians** - Ask your physician if she/he will take your used syringes once they are properly placed in a container.

**Local Health Departments** - Ask the Health Officer of your local health department if there are any syringe disposal facilities in your area. (see <http://nj.gov/health/lh/directory/lhdselectcounty.htm> for a directory of local and county NJ health departments and contact information.)

**Household Waste** - Follow these steps to safely dispose of your syringes in your municipal trash. Your syringes must be placed in rigid containers that will protect people from needle sticks and use containers that are unlikely to break open on its way to the landfill.

**1. Rigid Container** You may use empty laundry detergent bottles or 2-liter soda 'pop' bottles or other rigid containers with screw-on caps to dispose of needles and syringes. Check with a pharmacy. Ask if it sells commercial containers specially designed to hold sharps for disposal in your household trash.

**2. Label/Warning** Place a large label with a warning on the empty container. **Example: SYRINGES - DO NOT RECYCLE**

**3. Needle Clipper Clip the needle.** You can buy an inexpensive hand held needle clipper from the pharmacy. **Using anything other than a clipper to break a needle is not safe.** After clipping the needle, carefully place each of your used needles and syringes into a plastic bottle with a screw-on lid. To the extent practicable, the individual receiving the medical treatment should clip the needle and syringe and place them in the container. In cases where this cannot be done due to the limitations of that individual, and a family care giver or volunteer must perform this activity, it is recommended that the individual's physician be consulted first.

**4. Seal** Seal the bottle tightly with its original lid and wrap duct tape over the lid after you fill the bottle with syringes.

**5. Disposal** You may now dispose of the tightly sealed full container of syringes in your household garbage - **NOT** in your recycling bin. Remember, although you may feel healthy, your used syringes can transmit germs. In addition, loose syringes thrown in your trash can seriously hurt people. We all benefit from the safe disposal of syringes. Please do your part to help keep our environment clean and safe.

For additional information, you may visit the web sites listed below or contact:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Consumer and Environmental Health Services  
Public Health Sanitation and Safety Program.  
P.O. Box 369  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0369  
Telephone: (609) 588-3124  
[www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/phss](http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/phss)

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Resource Recovery & Technical Programs  
Division of Solid & Hazardous Waste  
Regulated Medical Waste Program  
PO Box 414, 401 East State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0414  
Telephone: (609) 984-6620  
E-Mail: [dshweb@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:dshweb@dep.state.nj.us)  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/rntp/rmw.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/rntp/rmw.htm)

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 2, MAIN OFFICE 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007-1866  
Phone: 212-637-3000  
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/other/medical/sharps.htm>

## **Safe Syringe Disposal Update: 2008**

### **Atlantic County**

Rachael Bohs, Dir. Infection Control  
Atlantic City Medical Center / City Division  
Atlantic City  
609-441-8988

Rachael Bohs, Dir. Infection Control  
Atlantic City Medical Center / Mainland  
Pomona  
609-652-1000

Dave West, Environmental Services  
Shore Memorial Hospital  
Somers Point  
(609) 653-3612

Mark Miranda, Dir. Public Affairs  
Kessler Memorial Hospital  
Hammonton  
609-561-6700 ext.5385

### **Bergen County**

Colleen T. Merkel (or Materials / SPD Manager)  
Englewood Hospital & Medical Center  
Englewood  
201-894-3189

Environmental Services  
Holy Name Hospital  
Teaneck  
201- 833-3176

### **Burlington County**

Environmental Services  
Virtua Memorial Hospital of Burlington County  
Mount Holly  
609-267-0700

Becky Schars, Director, The Wound Care Center  
Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County  
Willingboro  
609- 835-5809

### **Camden County**

Kelly Brennan, Support Services  
Cooper Health System  
Camden  
(856) 342- 3122

Raeann Easterday, Director  
Virtua Family Health Center  
Camden  
856-246-3542

Patient Information  
Virtua West Jersey Hospital – Berlin  
Berlin  
856-322-3000

Patient Information  
Virtua West Jersey Hospital – Voorhees  
Voorhees  
856-325-3000

Environmental Services  
Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center  
Camden  
856-757-3815

### **Cape May County**

Maryann Viereck, Employee Health Coordinator  
Cape Regional Medical Center  
609-463-2491

### **Cumberland**

Toni Whately, Environmental Services  
South Jersey Healthcare – Regional Medical Center  
Vineland  
856-641-7510

### **Essex County**

Kathleen Brozyna, Point of Care Coordinator  
Mountainside Hospital  
Montclair  
973-429-6955

Ken Richter, Safety Management  
St. Barnabas Medical Center  
Livingston  
973-322-8258

Environmental Services  
UMDNJ University Hospital  
Newark  
973-972-4300

## **Gloucester County**

Environmental Services  
Underwood-Memorial Hospital  
Woodbury  
856-845-0100

## **Hudson County**

Tom Jerkovich, Director, Environmental  
Christ Hospital Home Health & Hospice Services  
Jersey City  
201-418-6800

Nancy Brobeck, Clinical Manager  
Meadowlands Hospital Medical Center  
Secaucus  
201-392-3531

## **Hunterdon County**

Carolyn Swithers, RN, Dir. of Health Education  
Center for Nutrition & Diabetic Management  
Wescott Medical Arts Center  
Flemington  
908- 237-6920

## **Mercer County**

Environmental Service  
Capital Health System at Mercer  
Trenton  
609-394-4184

Environmental Services  
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital / Hamilton  
Hamilton  
609-586-7900

Joan Gilliard, Secretary  
University Medical Center at Princeton  
Princeton  
609-497-4266

**Middlesex County**

Judith Leschek, Infection Control Department  
JFK Medical Center  
Edison  
732-321-7539

Dianne Spector  
Employee Health Department  
St. Peter University Hospital  
New Brunswick  
732-745-8600 ext. 8282

Housekeeping  
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital  
New Brunswick  
732- 828-3000

**Monmouth County**

Suzanne Khanna, Program Coordinator  
Nova Nordisk Diabetes Center  
Starr & Barry Tobias Ambulatory Center  
Freehold  
732-294-2574

Environmental Services  
Jersey Shore University Medical Center  
Neptune  
732-776-4225

Environmental Services  
Monmouth Medical Center  
Long Branch  
732-222-5200

Medical Supply  
Meridian Health System at Riverview  
Red Bank  
732-530-2402



## **Morris County**

Information Desk  
St Clare's Hospital / Denville  
Denville  
973-625-6000Ch

Environmental Services  
Chilton Memorial Hospital  
Pompton Plains  
973-831-5000

Information Desk  
St. Clare's Hospital / Dover  
Dover  
973-989-3000

Environmental Services  
Morristown Memorial Hospital  
Morristown  
973-971-5000

## **Ocean County**

Carmen Gabriele, Director of Environmental Services  
Community Medical Center  
Toms River  
732-557-8005

Patient Satisfaction Department  
Kimball Medical Center  
Lakewood  
732- 886-4600

Ocean Medical Dialysis Center  
Ocean Medical Center  
Brick  
732-206-8200

Environmental Services  
Southern Ocean County Hospital  
Manahawkin  
609-978-8900

## **Salem County**

Environmental Services  
The Memorial Hospital of Salem County  
Salem  
856-935-1000

Linda Wendling, Manager Environmental Services  
South Jersey Healthcare – Elmer Hospital  
Elmer  
856-363-1508

## **Somerset County**

Sterile Processing  
Somerset Medical Center  
Somerville  
908-685-2200

Judith Iselin, Diabetes Center Program Coordinator  
Somerset Diabetes Center  
908-685-2846

## **Sussex County**

Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority  
973-579-6990

Housekeeping  
St. Clare's Hospital / Sussex  
Sussex  
973-702-2600

## **Union County**

Joseph Stokes, Director Environmental Services  
Trinitas Hospital  
Elizabeth  
908-994-5077

Environmental Services  
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital / Rahway  
Rahway  
732-381-4200

## **Warren County**

Rich Markle, Environmental Services  
Warren Hospital  
Phillipsburg  
908-859-6700 ext. 2043

## **LIST OF RESOURCES**

American Diabetes Association (New Jersey)  
200 Cottontail Lane, Somerset, New Jersey 08873  
PHONE: (732) 469-7979 or  
(888) 342-2383 (calls from New Jersey only)  
(see also <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>)

American Association of Diabetes Educators  
100 West Monroe, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60603  
(800) 338-3633  
<http://www.aadenet.org/>

International Diabetes Center  
3800 Park Nicollet Boulevard  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
(888) 825-6315  
<http://www.parknicollet.com/diabetes/>

Visiting Nurse Association  
of Central Jersey  
141 Bodman Place, Red Bank, NJ 07701-1096  
(732) 747-1204  
<http://www.vnacj.org/>

New Jersey Pharmacist's Association  
760 Alexander Road, PO Box 1  
Princeton, NJ 08543-0001  
(609) 275-4246  
[NJPHARM@njpharma.org](mailto:NJPHARM@njpharma.org) <http://www.njpharma.org/>