



SAFE USE AND DISPOSAL OF SHARPS

The risk of injury or infection from accidents with sharps within general practice is significant. The purpose of this protocol is to provide some basic rules relating to the handling and disposal of sharps.

Sharps must not be passed directly from hand to hand, and handling should be kept to a minimum.

Needles must not be bent or broken prior to use.

Always dispose of sharps at the point of use in a suitable container. The date of opening of the sharps container should be clearly visible and written in pen.

Needles **must not** be re-sheathed by hand.

Syringes/cartridges and needles **should be disposed of intact**.

Do not fill sharps containers above the manufacturer's marked line.

Lock the used sharps container when ready for final disposal in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The date of sealing the container should be clearly visible and written in pen.

Sharps containers should be disposed of when the manufacturer's marked line has been reached or at intervals specified by local procedures, usually no more than three months.

Always carry used sharps containers by the handle.

Do not dispose of sharps with other clinical waste.

Do not place used sharps containers in yellow bags for disposal.

Place damaged used sharps containers into a large secure rigid container, which is properly labelled.

Dispose of sharps containers either by incineration or maceration, followed by heat or chemical treatment.