

Salon Services

SHARPS CONTAINERS

creating healthy communities
together

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What is a sharp?

Sharps is a general term for all types of instruments or materials that have points or sharp edges capable of penetrating the skin. This can include needles, lancets, razor blades, credo blades and biologically contaminated broken glass.

What is a sharps container?

A sharps container is a puncture-resistant, leak-proof receptacle that is impervious to moisture and tightly lidded. They are clearly marked with a universal biohazard symbol that states "Biomedical Waste/Dechets Biomedicaux."

Why do I need to dispose sharps into a sharps container?

Disposing sharps correctly protects individuals from sharps injury by preventing them from handling these sharp items in their regular garbage. It is also a requirement (Ontario Ministry of Health) to dispose of all sharps which contact the skin into an approved sharps container.

Where do I get a sharps container?

A sharps container can be obtained at a pharmacy or aesthetic supplier (call ahead to ensure that they carry sharps containers). Many pharmacies offer the container free of charge while others require you to purchase the container at a minimal cost.

What do I do when my sharps container is full?

For a sharps container, full actually means $\frac{3}{4}$ of the container is full (not full to the top). This is to prevent sharps injury so that you are not reaching into a full container. When your container is full, it must be securely closed and disposed of properly as biomedical waste. It must not be thrown away in your regular garbage. If you have obtained your sharps container from a pharmacy, most of them will dispose the containers as well.

Sometimes there is a disposal fee, but both the cost associated with the purchase and disposal is minimal.

How do I handle my sharps safely?

- Never re-cap used needles, you can stick yourself in the process.
- Do not force a sharp into the container or retrieve a sharp in the container.
- Discard contaminated sharps immediately into a sharps container.

What if I am injured by a sharp?

1. Wash the injury with soap and water for several minutes, allow it to bleed freely.
2. Apply a skin antiseptic and cover with a clean dressing or bandage.
3. Seek medical attention.
4. Clean equipment exposed to blood or body fluids by removing organic material and disinfecting the equipment using a high level disinfectant.
5. Document the incident. Include the names of individuals injured and those exposed, the date and site of injury, the circumstances surrounding the injury and actions taken. Keep this record on site for a minimum of one year and on file for five years.



For more information contact the Infectious Disease Team at the Huron County Health Unit 519-482-3416 or toll-free 1-877-837-6143.