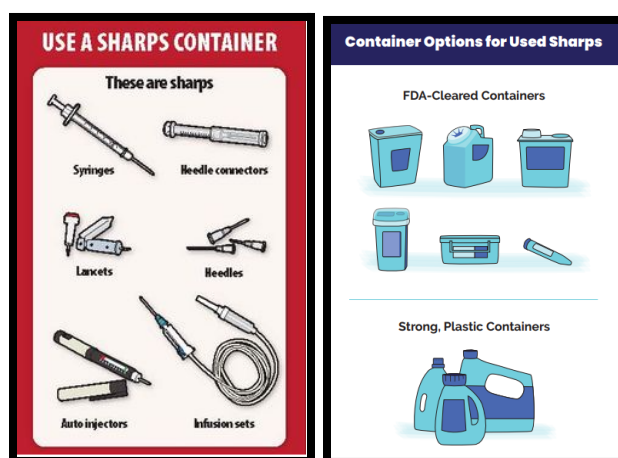




Medical Waste Disposal (Sharps & Medications) FAQs from Tri-Town Public Health Nurse - April, 2023

Q: What type of container do I need to use to dispose of syringes/sharps?

A: A sharps container is a single-use container that is properly marked, filled with used medical sharps and then disposed of safely. These may be available for free or for purchase from pharmacies, hospitals, doctors offices, insurance companies or ordered through the mail. If you do not have access to sharps containers, you can place sharps in puncture resistant containers, such as rigid plastic bottles like laundry detergent bottles or coffee cans with a secure cap. These containers should be properly marked to indicate "SHARPS" enclosed to help prevent needlestick injuries that cause injury and infections and may transmit diseases such as hepatitis or HIV.



Q: How do I dispose of sharps containers (Needles, Syringes)

A: There are a variety of mail back programs and drop off locations to properly dispose of used sharps. Check with the provider where you got the sharps container.

Mail back services provide a variety of container sizes and prepaid mailing cartons:

- Medasend: 800-200-3581
- Stericycle: 800-355-8773
- Sharps Compliance, Inc: 800-772-5657

Tri-Town Sharps Drop Off Sites For Residents ONLY:

- Boxford - East Fire Station - 6 Middleton Road
- Middleton - Transfer Station - 70-98 Natsue Way
- Topsfield - Fire Station - 27 High Street

Located in designated drop box areas only, residents only, no businesses.

- Drop off sharps in appropriate containers. No loose sharps.
- No medications.
- No batteries!
- Drop boxes are available in the lobby of the police depts during business hours.

Q: Can I put sharps in the trash or recycling?

A: NO, do not put sharps in the household trash! As of July 1, 2012, medical waste regulations do not allow the disposal of any sharps in household garbage. Improperly disposed of sharps may cause unintentional injuries, cause infections, and spread diseases such as hepatitis and HIV.

DO NOT Flush sharps down the toilet or drop into storm drains.

DO NOT Clip, bend or recap needles.



Q: How do I locate Syringe Services Programs (SSPs)

A: You may dispose of used syringes or exchange them for new, sterile ones at any of these sites. You may also be referred to medical help, to substance use disorder treatment, HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) education, risk reduction counseling, HIV, HCV, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, overdose prevention and access to naloxone (Narcan®), and linkage to primary care and case management services. SSPs are free.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/syringe-service-program-locator>

Prescription and Over the Counter Medication Waste



Q: How do I dispose of unwanted prescription and over the counter medicine waste?

A: Medicine take back options are the best way to safely dispose of unused or expired prescription and nonprescription (for example, over the counter) medicines.

A number of pharmacies, hospitals and police departments offer take back options.

Tri-Town Medication Drop Off Box Sites for Residents ONLY:

- Boxford - Police Station - 285 Ipswich Road
- Middleton - Police Station - 65 North Street
- Topsfield - Police Station - 210 Boston Street

Medication drop off boxes are located within the lobby of the Police Stations, no businesses.

- Keep medications in their original containers if possible.
- Leave drug names visible to help identify the contents, if they are accidentally swallowed.
- Cross out other personal information on labels to make it unreadable.
- No loose pills. Please put in plastic baggies if needed.
- No liquids, syrups, creams, pastes.
- No Sharps (Syringes/Needles).
- No batteries!
- Lobby open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Q: When are “drug take back” programs held?

A: Drug take back days are typically held annually in April to encourage residents to check their cabinets and clean out unwanted/expired/unused medications, check your towns calendar for dates and locations.

Q: How do I dispose of waste medications if I do not have access to a take back program or drop box?

A: The next best option is to remove the medications from their original containers and mix them with something undesirable, such as used coffee grounds, or cat litter. This makes the medicine less appealing to children and pets and unrecognizable to someone who might intentionally go through the trash looking for them.

1. Put the mixture in something you can close (a resealable zipper storage bag, empty can, or other container) to prevent the medicine from leaking or spilling out.
2. Throw the container in the garbage.
3. Scratch out all your personal information on the empty medicine packaging to protect your identity and privacy. Throw the packaging away.

Q: Can I flush unwanted medications down the toilet?

A: NO... Almost all homes and business in the Tri-Town are served by septic systems, flushing medications down the toilet can harm the biological process in the septic system. Use drug take back programs and drop boxes.

Drugs That Contain Opioids:

- Any drug that contains the word “buprenorphine” - BELBUCA, BUAVAIL, BUTRANS, SUBOXONE, SUBUTEX, ZUBSOLV
- Any drug that contains the word “fentanyl” - ABSTRAL, ACTIQ, DURAGESIC, FENTORA, ONSOLIS
- Any drug that contains the word “hydrocodone” or “benzhydrocodone” - APADAZ, HYSINGLA ER, NORCO, PREPRAIN, VICODIN, VICODIN ES, VICODIN HP, VICOPROFEN, ZOHYDRO ER
- Any drug that contains the word “hydromorphone” - EXALGO
- Any drug that contains the word “meperidine” - DEMEROL
- Any drug that contains the word “methadone” - DOLOPHINE, METHADOSE
- Any drug that contains the word “morphine” - ARYMO ER, AVINZA, EMBEDA, KADIAN, MORPHABOND ER, MS CONTIN, ORAMORPH SR
- Any drug that contains the word “oxycodone” - CODOXY, COMBUNOX, OXADYDO (formerly OXECTA), OXYCET, OXYCONTIN, PERCOCET, PERCODAN, ROXICET, ROXICODONE, ROXILOX, ROXYBOND, TARGINIQ ER, TROXYCA ER, TYLOX, XARTEMIS XR, XTAMPZA ER
- Any drug that contains the word “oxymorphone” - OPANA, OPANA ER
- Any drug that contains the word “tapentadol” - NUCYNTA, NUCYNTA ER

Drugs That Do Not Contain Opioids:

- Any drug that contains the term “sodium oxybate” or “sodium oxybates” - Any drug that contains the term “sodium oxybate” or “sodium oxybates” - XYREM, XYWAV
- Diazepam rectal gel - DIASTAT, DIASTAT ACUDIAL
- Methylphenidate transdermal system - DAYTRANA

[Drug Disposal: FDA's Flush List for Certain Medicines](#) (*While the FDA does advise “flushing” medications, locally this is NOT advised due to septic systems and water pollution.)

Q: What are some best practices for keeping a home free of unneeded medications?

A: Get rid of your prescriptions as soon as you are done with them. Disposing of them properly will keep them out of the hands of people who shouldn't take them.

Check your medication cabinets and around your home on a regular basis for:

- Prescription medication that you stopped taking because your doctor replaced it with another one or you felt better?
- Medications that have passed their expiration date?
- Medications used by people who no longer live in your house?

Please contact your local board of health or public health nurse with questions or for more information.

Boxford Health Dept
(978) 887-2875

Middleton Health Dept
(978) 777-1869

Topsfield Health Dept
(978) 887-1520

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