

## Oxfordshire Children's Diabetes Service

Children's Hospital, Oxford

Horton General Hospital, Banbury

# Safe Disposal of Sharps

A sharp is piece of equipment with an edge or point that is able to cut or pierce something. These may include the following:

- insulin pen needle
- pump cannula
- pump reservoir loading adapter/transfer device
- introducer needles for pump giving sets or CGM sensor
- blood glucose lancets
- glucagon injection needle.

It is the responsibility of the person using the sharps to dispose of them safely; this should not be in household rubbish.

Used needles can cause injuries to others if they are not disposed of safely. As needles carry body fluids, such as blood, accidental injury could lead to infections being transferred, such as HIV and hepatitis. Someone injuring themselves with a used needle is unlikely to know who the needle belonged to. They will need to have the risk assessed and may need preventative treatment.

## Sharps bin

GP practices can add a sharps bin to prescription items. These are specially designed British standard approved bins, which can be used to dispose of medical supplies. They can be locked once filled, to prevent accidental injury from the contents.

While waiting for a sharps bin, please store used sharps in a suitable container, such as a jam jar with a lid, kept out of children's reach.

Sharps bins can be collected and returned from/to:

- GP surgeries
- pharmacies
- kerb-side rubbish collection, if you live within Oxford City Council area.

Arrangements for disposing of full sharps bins vary from area to area. *Please check with whoever provides your sharps bin.*

It is reasonable to expect to an additional supply of bins for school. It may also be worth considering keeping a spare one in the car.

## General recommendations for the safe use and disposal of sharps

- Avoid leaving sharps lying around; this includes in cars, at school, at other peoples' houses and in public places.
- School staff who are doing injections for children should be provided with safety needles, to protect them from needle stick injury (speak to a Diabetes Specialist Nurse if it is not on the prescription).
- Do not bend/break needles before discarding them.
- Place contaminated sharps in the sharps bin as soon as possible after use. Do not use ordinary rubbish bins or makeshift containers.
- Do not try to press sharps down to make space or try to retrieve items from a sharps container.
- Only fill to the manufacturers' line (three-quarters full), then lock using the closure mechanism.
- Dispose of sharps bins every three months, even if they are not full.
- While your sharps bin is in use or waiting to be collected, keep it in a safe place and out of the reach of children, so that it's not a risk to other people.

If you have any questions, please contact a Diabetes Specialist Nurse (see contact sheet for telephone numbers).

If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

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