

# HRMC Offers Guidance on the Proper Use and Disposal of Needles and Syringes

If you're one of the many people in western Massachusetts who uses syringes to manage your health care or pet care at home, the Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC) wants you to know about the safe use and disposal of needles, syringes and lancets (sharps).

According to Massachusetts Sanitary Code, needles, syringes and sharps containers may not be thrown in the trash or in recycling bins. Medical waste regulations concerning sharps apply to both personal and veterinary use.

Smart Storage - Use a Sharps Container. A sharps container is a single-use container that is filled with used medical needles and then disposed of safely. These can be purchased at pharmacies, medical supply stores or ordered through the mail. Mail-back services such as Stericycle: 800-355-8773 (email: [mystericycle.com](mailto:mystericycle.com)) and Medasend: 800-200-3581 (email: [medasend.com](mailto:medasend.com)) provide for resident accounts and offer a variety of container sizes and prepaid mailing cartons.

Safe Handling - Protect yourself, your community, your environment, family, friends and foraging animals. The proper disposal of needles and syringes is important. Put used syringes in a sharps container immediately. Keep needles away from children and pets. Bring along a sharps container when traveling.

Smart Disposal - Collection and Drop Off Centers. Filled sharps containers must be disposed of at a drop-off site or through a medical mail-back service. Collection programs are available in many towns - contact your Board of Health to see if they have a collection site. If your community doesn't have a sharps disposal program, the Tapestry Health (16 Center Street, Northampton) offers a sharps program that is available for hilltown residents. For further information, contact the Tapestry Health at: 413-586-0310.

Never place sharps or sharps containers in the recycling - this is hazardous to the haulers, and individuals working at the transfer station and the municipal recycling facility. Do not flush sharps down the toilet or drop into storm drains. Do not clip or bend needles.

Do your part to reduce the risk of blood-borne diseases like hepatitis and HIV/AIDS by properly handling and disposing of sharps.