

# SAFE SYRINGE DISPOSAL GUIDE FOR HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE

September 1999

## ***INTRODUCTION***

Home generators of medical waste may account for the use of up to 700,000 sharps daily in New Jersey. The most common disease that requires self-injection of insulin and lancets to monitor blood sugar levels at home is diabetes. There are more than 280,000 individuals who have diabetes in the State of New Jersey\*.

The proper disposal of home generated medical waste is an important step that all home generators of medical waste can take to help ensure the health and safety of all New Jerseyans.

## ***WHAT HEALTH EFFECTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE?***

The improper disposal of home generated medical waste poses a potential health hazard to many, including family members, sanitation workers, people in the community, hotel housekeeping staffs and school personnel. Although rare, diseases as serious as Hepatitis B and AIDS can also result from accidental needle sticks. In addition, loose syringes thrown into your household trash can also be misused if they fall into the wrong hands. Moreover, these items can injure small children, pets and wildlife.

## ***DOES THIS GUIDE APPLY TO YOU?***

The Safe Syringe Disposal Guide (Guide) applies to New Jerseyans generating medical waste at home. These individuals are referred to throughout this Guide as home generators of medical waste. *This Guide also applies to individuals visiting the State of New Jersey.*

*\*NJDHSS Center for Health Statistics (1996)*

***If you produce any medical waste at home, this Guide may apply to you.***



Consumer and Environmental Health Services

## ***WHAT IS HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE?***

Home generated medical waste is created through the administration of injectable medications and other invasive or non-invasive procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, syringes, needles with attached tubing and other materials.

## ***WHO ARE HOME GENERATORS OF MEDICAL WASTE?***

Home generators of medical waste include any individual who produces waste as a result of medical care in the home (home self-care) through self-administration practices or by a family member or other person not receiving money for their services.

## ***ARE THERE LAWS GOVERNING THE DISPOSAL OF HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE IN NEW JERSEY?***

Yes. The improper disposal of syringes or reusable hypodermic needles is regulated by State law (N.J.S.A. 2A:170-25.17). This Statute prohibits any person from discarding disposable or reusable hypodermic needles or syringes, in public or private places which are accessible to other persons (including trespassers) without first destroying the needle or syringe. This means you are responsible for destroying your needles and syringes, even when you visit other people.

Violators of this Statute can be fined up to \$500.00 and/or imprisoned or both. *If visiting other states, check their laws to determine whether your medical waste is regulated and the proper disposal methods.*

## ***WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL WASTE GENERATED BY MEDICAL CARE WORKERS IN YOUR HOME?***

Medical waste produced by health care workers (physicians, nurses, home health aides, etc.) as a result of providing medical care in the home is *not* home generated medical waste. It is Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) as defined in the N.J.A.C. 7:26-3A, and must be disposed of by a licensed RMW generator in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) RMW regulations. **The responsibility for the proper and safe disposal of regulated medical waste rests with the health care provider providing services in the home.**

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## ***HOW CAN YOU SAFELY DISPOSE OF YOUR SYRINGES?***

Several options are available to safely dispose of used syringes generated in the home.

- ! **Safe Syringe Disposal Program** - The New Jersey Hospital Association together with local hospitals offer a program to safely and responsibly dispose of syringes, needles and lancets generated in the home. Participating hospitals offer rigid containers to dispose of these items for a small one time fee to individuals who are injection dependent. (This program does not require needles to be clipped prior to placing them in the container). The container must be returned to the hospital when full for proper disposal and will be exchanged for a new empty container at that time. A list of participating hospitals is listed at the back of this brochure. Additional information about the Safe Syringe Disposal Program may be obtained by contacting:

***See Back of Brochure  
for a List of  
Participating Hospitals.***

New Jersey Hospital Association  
760 Alexander Road  
Princeton, New Jersey 08543  
(609) 275-4058

- ! **Physicians** - Ask your physician if she/he will take your used syringes once they are properly placed in a container.
- ! **Local Health Departments** - Ask the Health Officer of your local health department if there are any syringe disposal facilities in your area.
- ! **Household Waste** - Follow the steps below to safely dispose of your syringes in your municipal trash. Your syringes must be placed in rigid containers that will protect people from needle sticks and use containers that are unlikely to break open on its way to the landfill.
  1. **Rigid Container** You may use empty laundry detergent bottles or 2-liter soda ‘pop’ bottles or other rigid containers with screw-on caps to dispose of needles and syringes.

Check with a pharmacy. Ask if it sells commercial containers specially designed to hold sharps for disposal in your household trash.

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2. Label/Warning      Place a large label with a warning on the empty container.  
**Example: SYRINGES - DO NOT RECYCLE**
  
  3. Needle Clipper      Clip the needle. You can buy an inexpensive hand held needle clipper from the pharmacy. **Using anything other than a clipper to break a needle is not safe.** After clipping the needle, carefully place each of your used needles and syringes into a plastic bottle with a screw-on lid. To the extent practicable, the individual receiving the medical treatment should clip the needle and syringe and place them in the container. In cases where this cannot be done due to the limitations of that individual, and a family care giver or volunteer must perform this activity, it is recommended that the individual's physician be consulted first.
  
  4. Seal                      Seal the bottle tightly with its original lid and wrap 'duct tape' over the lid after you fill the bottle with syringes.
  
  5. Disposal                You may now dispose of the tightly sealed full container of syringes in your household garbage - NOT in your recycling bin.

Remember, although you may feel healthy, your used syringes can transmit germs. In addition, loose syringes thrown in your trash can seriously hurt people. We all benefit from the safe disposal of syringes. Please do your part to help keep our environment clean and safe.

For additional information, you may visit our web site or contact the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services at the address below.

[www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/cehsweb](http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/cehsweb)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Consumer and Environmental Health Services  
Regulated Medical Waste Program  
P.O. Box 369  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0369  
Telephone: (609) 588-3124

**SAFE SYRINGE DISPOSAL PROGRAM  
(HOSPITAL PARTICIPANTS)**

**ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Lynn Gove  
Director, Infection Control  
*Atlantic City Medical Center/City Div.*  
PHONE:(609) 345-4000 ext.2874 FAX: (609) 441-8152  
Lynn Gove Director, Infection Control  
*Atlantic City Medical Center/Mainland*  
PHONE:(609) 652-1000 ext.2844 FAX: (609) 652-3589

Timothy Oliver  
Director, Materials Management  
*Shore Memorial Hospital*  
PHONE: (609) 653-3602 FAX: (609) 653-3409

Joan Stahl  
Marketing Specialist  
*William B. Kessler Memorial Hospital*  
PHONE: (609) 561-6700 ext.5393 FAX:(609) 561-8370

**BERGEN COUNTY**

Colleen T. Merkel  
OR Materials/SPD Manager  
*Englewood Hospital & Medical Center*  
PHONE: (201) 894-3189 FAX: (201) 894-7295

Ellen McAllister  
Health Educator, Community Health Service  
*Holy Name Hospital*  
PHONE: (201) 837-1850 FAX: (201) 837-7551

Terry Dannels, RN  
Director, Infection Control  
*The Valley Hospital*  
PHONE: (201) 447-8692 FAX: (201) 447-8448

**BURLINGTON COUNTY**

Joan Stewart  
Certified Diabetes Educator  
*Alliance Memorial Hospital of Burlington County*  
PHONE: (609) 267-0700 ext.1653 FAX:(609) 261-9679

Carol Mest  
Coordinator, Patient & Community Education  
*Rancocas Hospital*  
PHONE: (609) 835-2900 ext.4016 FAX:(609) 835-5470

**CAMDEN COUNTY**

Vickie Eisenhardt  
Clinical Director, Family Health Center  
*West Jersey Health System*  
PHONE: (609) 246-3542 FAX: (609) 246-3528

**CAPE MAY COUNTY**

Joanne Erasquin  
Employee Health Coordinator  
*Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital*  
PHONE: (609) 463-2491 FAX: (609) 463-2910

**ESSEX COUNTY**

Renita Larang  
Nurse Educator  
*Irvington General Hospital*  
PHONE: (973) 399-6159 FAX:(973) 399-3860

Tris Berlinski  
Specimen Collection Supervisor  
*The Mountainside Hospital*  
PHONE: (973) 429-6955 FAX: (973) 429-6992

Norma Gonzalez  
Department Secretary  
*Saint James Hospital*  
PHONE: (973) 465-2796 FAX: (973) 465-2861

Ken Richter  
Safety Management  
*St. Barnabas Medical Center*  
PHONE: (973) 533-8258 FAX: (973) 533-8401

**HUDSON COUNTY**

Nancy Berger  
Diabetes Educator  
*Bayonne Hospital*  
PHONE: (201) 858-5219 FAX: (201) 858-6586

Josephine Scherring  
Director, Environmental/Dietary Services  
*Christ Hospital Home Health & Hospice Services*  
PHONE: (201) 795-8366 FAX: (201) 795-8678

**HUDSON COUNTY cont'd.**

Rosemary Farrell  
 Clinical Manager  
*Meadowlands Hospital Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (201)-392-3531 FAX:(201)-392-3538

**HUNTERDON COUNTY**

Carolyn Swithers, RN  
 Director of Health Education  
*Hunterdon Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (908) 788-6136 FAX: (908) 788-2538

**MERCER COUNTY**

Jack Walsh  
 Environmental Coordinator  
*Capital Health System at Mercer*  
 PHONE: (609) 394-4184 FAX: (609) 396-5080

Joan Gilliard  
 Secretary

*Medical Center at Princeton*  
 PHONE: (609) 497-4266 FAX: (609) 497-4996

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

Judith Leschek  
 Infection Control Department  
*JFK Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 321-7000 ext.7539 FAX: (732) 906-4952

Ed Hurley

Nursing Unit Secretary, 5-B Diabetes Unit  
*St. Peter's Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 745-8600 ext.8470 FAX: (732) 249-7390

**MONMOUTH COUNTY**

Sandra Gunther  
 Manager, Environmental Services  
*Bayshore Community Hospital*  
 PHONE: (732) 739-5929 FAX: (732) 290-7042

Suzanne Khanna

Program Coordinator, Diabetes Care Program  
*CentraState Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 294-2574 FAX: (732) 294-2575

Pat Baker/Stacy Meyers

Program Coordinator/Dept. Secretary  
*Jersey Shore Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 776-4477 FAX: (732) 776-4880

Cheryl Laviola

Office Coordinator  
 Diabetes Management Center  
*Meridian Health System at Riverview*  
 PHONE: (732) 530-2555 FAX: (732) 224-3916

**MONMOUTH COUNTY cont'd.**

Shirley Stolz  
 Clinic Case Aide  
*Monmouth Health Center (Monmouth Medical Center)*  
 PHONE: (732) 923-7100 FAX (732) 923-7104

**MORRIS COUNTY**

Debbie Burnet  
 Lab Manager, Customer Service  
*Morristown Memorial Hospital*  
 PHONE: (973) 971-4177 FAX: (973) 540-1964

Phyllis Sperry

Manager, Building Services  
*Saint Clares Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (973) 989-3073 FAX: (973) 989-3520

**OCEAN COUNTY**

Carmen Gabriele  
 Director, Environmental Services  
*Community Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 240-8005 FAX: (732) 818-4001

Albert Lazaro

Director of Environmental Services  
*Kimball Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (732) 363-1900 FAX: (732) 886-4658

Donna Sacerdote

Manager  
*Medical Center of Ocean County - Brick*  
 PHONE: (732) 840-3390 FAX:(732) 840-3286

Richard DeCicco

Coordinator, Housekeeping  
*Medical Center of Ocean County - Point Pleasant*  
 PHONE: (732) 295-6490 FAX: (732) 840-3286

Carol Schoenberger

Manager, Health Resources  
*Southern Ocean County Hospital*  
 PHONE: (609) 978-8999 FAX: (609) 978-3079

**PASSAIC COUNTY**

Connie Colon  
 Director, Environmental Services  
*Barnert Hospital*  
 PHONE: (973) 977-6699 FAX: (973) 977-6838

**SOMERSET COUNTY**

Vipin Patel  
 Manager, Sterile Processing  
*Somerset Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (908) 685-2200 ext.3258 FAX (908)685-2837

**SOMERSET COUNTY cont'd.**

Judith Iselin  
 Diabetes Center Program Coordinator  
*Somerset Diabetes Center*  
 PHONE: (908) 685-2846 FAX: (908) 685-2837

**UNION COUNTY**

Joyce Hebbe, RN  
 Infection Control Coordinator  
*Elizabeth General Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (908) 629-8398 FAX: (908) 629-8972

John Caga  
 Medical Waste Coordinator  
*Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center*  
 PHONE: (908) 668-2531 FAX: (908) 668-2078

Pat Jablonski, RN, BSN, CDE  
 Diabetes Nurse Educator  
*Rahway Hospital*  
 PHONE: (732) 499-6056 FAX: (732) 499-6246

Nada R. Raiser  
 Administrative Director, Diabetes Mgmt. Center  
*Saint Elizabeth Hospital*  
 PHONE: (908) 527-5423 FAX: (908) 527-5425

**WARREN COUNTY**

Rich Markle  
 Environmental Services  
*Warren Hospital*  
 PHONE: (908) 859-6700 FAX: (908) 859-6848

**LIST OF RESOURCES cont'd.**

American Diabetes Association (New Jersey)  
 200 Cottontail Lane  
 Somerset, New Jersey 08873  
 PHONE: (732) 469-7979 or  
 (888) 342-2383 (calls from New Jersey only)

American Association of Diabetes  
 Educators  
 100 West Monroe  
 4th Floor  
 Chicago, IL 60603  
 (800) 338-3633

International Diabetes Center  
 3800 Park Nicollet Boulevard  
 Minneapolis, MN 55414  
 (888) 825-6315

New Jersey Hospital Association  
 760 Alexander Road  
 Princeton, NJ 08543  
 (609) 275-4000

Visiting Nurse Association  
 of Central Jersey  
 141 Bodman Place  
 Red Bank, NJ 07701-1096  
 (732) 747-1204

**LIST OF RESOURCES**

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation  
 Central Jersey Chapter  
 3430 Sunset Avenue  
 Suite 21-A  
 Ocean, NJ 07712  
 (732) 219-6654

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation  
 120 Wall Street  
 19th Floor  
 New York, NY 10005  
 (800) 223-1138

American Diabetes Association  
 1660 Duke Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 (800) 232-3472