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THE LEADER IN ALLERGY
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OAAC PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET HOME DISPOSAL OF USED IMMUNOTHERAPY SYRINGES

After you have given yourself an allergy shot, there are numerous ways to dispose of the syringe/needle that will help protect people and the environment. Improper management of discarded syringes and needles pose a health risk to the public and waste workers. Used syringes and needles can transmit serious diseases, such as HIV and Hepatitis.

PLACING SYRINGES IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS

The best containers are made of strong plastic so needles can't poke through, and have a small opening on top with a cap or lid that screw on tightly to prevent spills. Examples of these containers are empty bleach bottles or liquid detergent bottles. After use, place syringe directly in the container, never leave it just laying around. When the container is full, tightly secure the lid and reinforce it with heavy-duty tape before throwing it in the trash.

PLACING SYRINGES IN COFFEE CANS

You can also use plastic or metal coffee cans. When it gets full, close the lid tightly and seal it with heavy-duty tape before throwing it in the trash.

Don't use glass containers or lightweight plastic containers. Don't use any container that will be returned to a store. If you use a recyclable container be sure it doesn't end up in the recycling bin by mistake. Be sure to keep your container out of reach of small children and pets. Don't try to bend, break, or put the cap back on your needle-you might hurt yourself.

SHARPS CONTAINERS AND MAIL BACK PROGRAMS

Used allergy syringes may be placed in special containers called sharps collectors. These may be returned by mail to a collection site for proper disposal. This service usually requires a fee. Fees vary, depending on the size of the container. Check with your pharmacist, yellow pages, or search the Internet using keywords "sharps mail back."

SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (SEP)

You can safely exchange used needles for new needles. Contact the North American Syringe Exchange Network at 253-272-4857 or online at www.nasen.org.

AT HOME NEEDLE DESTRUCTION DEVICES

Several manufacturers offer products that allow you to destroy used needles at home. These devices sever, burn, or melt the syringe, rendering it safe for disposal. Check with your pharmacist or search the internet using keywords "sharps disposal devices." The prices of these devices vary according to product type and manufacturer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call your local solid waste department or public health department to determine the correct disposal method for your area
- Ask you local pharmacist if they offer disposal, or if they know of safe disposal programs in the area
- Contact the Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal at 1-800-643-1643. Visit www.epa.gov/epaoswer/other/medical. This website also offers a list of all state health and solid waste/sanitation department contacts.