

## Problem areas

If you regularly find needles and syringes in a particular area, please contact your Local Government Environmental Health Officer.

## Further information

If you have queries about finding discarded needles and syringes in your area contact your Local Government Environmental Health Officer.

### **Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)**

Telephone: 9442 5000 (metropolitan)  
or toll free: 1800 198 024 (non-metropolitan)

### **healthdirect**

Telephone: 1800 022 222

### **WA Substance Users' Association (WASUA)**

Telephone: 9321 2877

### **WA AIDS Council (WAAC)**

Telephone: 9482 0000

### **South Metro Community Drug Service**

#### **– Palmerston Mandurah**

Telephone: 9581 4010

### **Midwest Community Drug Service – Geraldton**

Telephone: 9956 2424



This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# Safe disposal of needles and syringes



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Needle and syringe programs reduce the spread of blood-borne infections such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.

Sometimes needles and syringes are inappropriately discarded in the community, creating concerns for the people who find them.

Used needles and syringes can be safely disposed of by:

- returning them to a needle and syringe exchange program (see details on back page)
- placing them in a special needle and syringe disposal unit (provided in some community areas such as public toilets by some local councils or businesses)
- arranging for a waste disposal company to assist in the disposal of large quantities of needles and syringes.

If none of the above is possible, used needles and syringes may be disposed of in domestic waste in a rigid-walled, puncture resistant plastic container with a screw-top lid.

The risk of catching HIV or other infections from an injury caused by a discarded needle is very low. However, it is important to follow certain steps when disposing of a needle and syringe.

## Dispose safely!

**Do not dispose of loose needles and syringes directly into green waste collection bins, recycling bins, drains or toilets, or post boxes.**

## What to do if you find a discarded needle and syringe

- Do not be alarmed.
- Get a rigid-walled, puncture resistant, plastic container with a well-secured lid, preferably screw top. Avoid using glass which can shatter, aluminium that can be squashed or frosted plastic that may not be puncture-proof.
- Bring the container to the needle and syringe, and place on the ground next to the needle and syringe. Do not hold the container as you are putting the syringe in it.
- Pick up the used needle and syringe by the blunt end, away from the point. Do not touch the sharp point.
- Do not try to put the plastic protective cap back on a needle if it has been removed.
- Put the needle and syringe, point first into the container. More than one needle and syringe can be placed in the container, but do not overfill. Do not carry the needle and syringe unless it is in a suitable container.
- Make sure the container is tightly sealed.
- Put the sealed container in a domestic rubbish bin. Do not put needles and syringes down toilets, in recycling bins or post boxes.

Tell children never to pick up a needle, but to let an adult know if they find one.

## What to do if you injure yourself with a discarded needle

1. Wash the area gently with soap and clean running tap water as soon as possible.
2. Apply an antiseptic and a clean dressing.
3. Obtain prompt medical advice from your local doctor or hospital emergency department, preferably within 24 hours.