

## Disposal of Prescription Drugs

The Department of Health strongly encourages residents to dispose of prescription drugs that are no longer needed to prevent their misuse. We offer the following advice to homeowners regarding disposal of these items.

Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet or drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so.

To dispose of them in the trash:

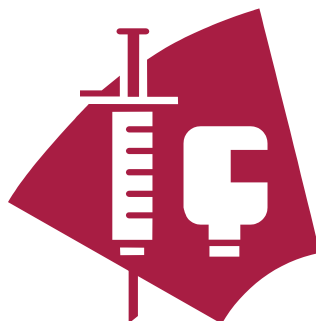
1. Take your prescription drugs out of their original containers.
2. Mix drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.
3. Put this mixture into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.
4. Conceal or remove any personal information, including Rx number, on the empty containers by covering it with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off.
5. Place the sealed container with the mixture, and the empty drug containers, in the trash.

### **For more information, contact:**

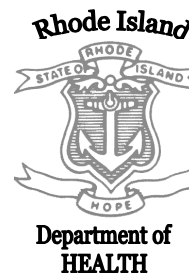
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Risk Assessment  
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RIDEM/ Office of Waste Management  
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Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation  
65 Shun Pike . Johnston, RI . 02919 .  
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Rhode Island Department of Health*



# HOME GUIDE FOR DISPOSAL OF MEDICAL WASTE AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS



## Why worry about disposal of medical waste in household trash?

Each year, many people are seriously injured from contact with improperly discarded needles in household trash. Waste handlers are at the highest risk, but small children and pets may



also be injured. Proper storage and disposal of medical waste will protect members of your household and the general public from accidental injury, as well as prevent environmental pollution.

### Who should follow this guide?

- Anyone who gives injection to themselves or others at home
- Anyone undergoing IV therapy or dialysis at home
- Anyone else who generates sharp or bloodied items in the course of administering home medical care

### Who should NOT follow this guide?

Medical Professionals and other businesses that generate medical waste, including sharps, are governed by RIDEM's [Medical Waste Regulations](#) and must dispose of waste according to those Regulations.



What items require special handling?

## Handling?

- **Sharp items**, such as needles/syringes and lancets, which can cause puncture wounds
- **Soiled or bloody items**, such as gauze, gloves and bandages, which may leak through paper trash bags

### How should these items be handled?

#### SOILED OR BLOODY ITEMS:

Put these items in securely sealed, leak proof plastic bags. The bags may be placed in your regular trash. Be sure to use tightly lidded trash barrels (esp. in warm weather) as any bloodied item will attract animals.

#### Sharp Items:

#### Disposal via Mail Back:

Some companies offer a service to provide sharps containers that can be mailed to the company for safe disposal. Information on the program can be found below (note the link(s) below are to private companies not affiliated with the State of RI):

<http://www.stericycle.com/consumer-needle-disposal.html>

#### Disposal at Needle Collection Locations:

Due to the fact that the Diabetes Foundation of RI is in receivership, this option is not currently available. The Department hopes it will be a viable option in the future and will update this site as needed.

#### Disposal in Trash as Solid Waste

Sharp items should be placed into the puncture resistant container immediately after use. Syringes should be disposed of as one unit; do not attempt to remove, bend,

break or recap the needle.

Although sharps containers are preferred, one of the following puncture resistant containers can be used:



- 1 gallon empty bleach or detergent bottle with a screw-on or tightly sealed lid
- A 1 pound coffee can with the lid taped closed

You may add a disinfecting solution to the container by mixing 1 teaspoon of household bleach to one pint of water. The container is now ready for disposal.

- **Do not** use a glass or clear container for needle/syringe disposal
- **Do not** use soda cans or bottles, juice bottles or milk cartons
- **Do not** use a container that is to be recycled or returned to a store
- **Do not** place these containers where they may fall and spill open
- **Do not** remove items previously placed in the container for ANY reason
- **Do not** dispose of needles or syringes in the toilet

**STORE ALL ITEMS IN AREAS THAT ARE CHILD AND ANIMAL PROOF.**

**NEVER PLACE MEDICAL WASTE OR CONTAINERS OF MEDICAL WASTE IN RECYCLING BINS!**

