

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.

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: (08) 9442 5000 (metropolitan)

Or toll free: 1800 198 024 (non-metropolitan)

Health Direct

Telephone: 1800 022 222

WA Substance Users' Association (WASUA)

Telephone: (08) 9321 2877

WA AIDS Council (WAAC)

Telephone: (08) 9482 0000



Department of
Health

Produced by Communicable Disease Control
Directorate and Environmental Health Directorate
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Safe disposal of needles and syringes



Delivering a **Healthy WA**

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

You can safely dispose of used needles and syringes in three ways:

1. Return to an exchange program (currently operated in the metropolitan area and the Southwest by the WA Substance Users' Association and the WA AIDS Council - see back page).
2. Dispose in the domestic waste in a sealed plastic container.
3. Dispose in a special needle and syringe disposal unit.

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

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 discarded 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

1. Find a rigid-walled, puncture resistant, plastic container with a screw top lid such as a milk, juice or soft drink bottle.

Do not use:
 - Glass bottles as they can shatter.
 - Aluminium cans which may be squashed.
 - Some frosted plastic containers (such as some juice bottles) which may not be puncture proof.
2. 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 disposing of the needle and syringe.
3. Pick up the needle and syringe by the blunt end, away from the point.
 - Do not touch the sharp point with your fingers.
 - Do not try to re-cap the needle.
4. Place the needle and syringe into the container, sharp end first. You can place more than one needle and syringe in a container but take care not to over fill.
5. Seal the container tightly.
6. Put the sealed container into the domestic rubbish bin immediately.
 - Do not dispose of in the recycling bin.

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