

## What Are Sharps?

“Sharps” is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. Examples of sharps include:

- **Needles** – hollow needles used to inject drugs (medication) under the skin
- **Syringes** – devices used to inject medication into or withdraw fluid from the body
- **Lancets, also called “fingerstick” devices** – instruments with a short, two-edged blade used to get drops of blood for testing. Lancets are commonly used in the treatment of diabetes.
- **Auto Injectors, including epinephrine and insulin pens** – syringes pre-filled with fluid medication designed to be self-injected into the body
- **Infusion sets** – tubing systems with a needle used to deliver drugs to the body.
- **Connection needles/sets** – needles that connect to a tube used to transfer fluids in and out of the body. This is generally used for patients on home hemodialysis.



Sharps may be used at home, at work, and while traveling to manage the medical conditions of people or their pets. These medical conditions include allergies, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, blood clotting disorders, and psoriasis.

There are about 9 million Americans who use needles or other sharps to manage their medical conditions at home. This amounts to more than 3 billion used needles and other sharps that must be disposed of outside health care settings each year (Statistics provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).