



# Safety Talk



April 2023

## ***Sharps – High Risk Hazard in Springtime***

Communities around Northern Ontario pick up thousands of sharps in the springtime as snowbanks melt, walkways clear, and areas such as playgrounds clear. Awareness of the hazard of handling sharps, such as glass or needles, and knowledge on how to dispose of sharps is critical to keep everyone safe.

Please check with your company on existing sharps policy and procedure for disposing of sharps.

### ***How to safely dispose of needles (syringes)***

If you see a discarded needle, you can safely pick it up by following these steps:

1. Find a hard, non-breakable container that needles cannot poke through, with a screw-on or tight-fitting lid (examples, rigid detergent bottle, bleach bottle).
  - Do not use glass containers as they can easily break.
  - Do not use light plastic containers or a milk carton as the needles could poke through.
  - Some pharmacies are part of the “Take It Back” Ontario Sharps Collection program and may provide a sharps container free-of-charge.
2. Put the container on a stable surface next to the sharp.
  - Do not hold the container in your hand when placing the sharp inside.
  - Do not touch the sharp with your bare hand.
3. Use tongs or pliers to pick up the needle by the plastic end (not the sharp end), with the needle pointing away from your body.
  - Do not try to put the cap back on the needle.
4. Place the needle, sharp end first, into your sharps container.
  - Do not force the needle into the container.
5. Tightly seal the lid (use duct tape if you have it).
6. Label your container as “sharps” and store it far out of reach of children.
7. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
8. Take your container to a safe needle disposal location in your municipality.

**Note: City of Sudbury, dial 3-1-1, and they will pick up discarded needles and sharps.**



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