

Medication and sharps return and disposal

Why do I need to return medicines to be destroyed?



Unwanted medicines stored in the home can be a source of poisoning. Medicine and equipment can also contaminate the environment and harm others when discarded via routine rubbish collections or flushed down the toilet.

Other equipment such as gloves, plastic medicine cups, syringes (but not with needles), empty medicine containers and empty blister packs can be disposed of in normal rubbish. This also applies to the equipment used with cytotoxic medication.

How do I return unwanted medicines?

Any unused medication such as **tablets, capsules, mixtures, creams, inhalers or patches** should be returned to a pharmacy for appropriate disposal.

Syringes with needles should be returned a pharmacy in a sharps container. This is the only safe way to bring them back both for you and for staff.

Medication	Tablets, capsules, mixtures, creams, inhalers or patches	Return to any pharmacy
Equipment	Gloves, plastic medicine cups, syringes, empty medicine containers and empty blister packs	Rinse containers and put in the normal household rubbish bin
Sharps When three quarters full, seal the containers and return to the hospital pharmacy or local community pharmacy for disposal	Needles with a purple sticker	Put in a purple sharps container 
	Other needles and syringes with needles	Put in a yellow sharps container 

How do I purchase sharps containers?

There are two kinds of sharps containers

- purple for cytotoxic needles and sharps
- yellow for other needles and sharps.

The Royal Children's Hospital: Sharps containers can be obtained from the Children's Cancer Centre Pharmacy during business hours.

Monash Children's: Sharps containers can be obtained from the Children's Cancer Centre during business hours.

Some community pharmacies also sell yellow sharps containers in various sizes.

Returned syringes that are not in an appropriate sharps container will not be accepted for destruction.

Prepared by Pharmacy Department, The Royal Children's Hospital June 2011

Coordinated and facilitated by the Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service for the Children's Cancer Centre at The Royal Children's Hospital, Monash Children's – Southern Health and The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. **Updated June 2011**

