

# 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 to a pharmacy in a sharps container. This is the only safe way to bring them back both for you and for staff.

<b>MEDICATION</b>	Tablets, capsules, mixtures, creams, inhalers or patches	Return to any pharmacy
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Gloves, plastic medicine cups, syringes, empty medicine containers and empty blister packs	Rinse containers and put in the normal household rubbish bin
<b>SHARPS</b> 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 Hospital: 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.**

## CONTACT

For further information, or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's medication, please feel free to contact the Children's Cancer Centre of your child's treating hospital:

- The Royal Children's Hospital Oncology Pharmacy (03) 9345 6290
- Monash Children's Hospital Cancer Centre (03) 8572 3456 or Pharmacist desk (03) 8572 3464

Disclaimer: This information has been prepared by the Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service, with input from the Children's Cancer Centre Pharmacy Departments at The Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Children's Hospital. This information is for educational purposes only and should not be seen as a substitute for advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have specific questions about the content of this information, or any other medical matter, it is recommended that you consult your doctor, pharmacist or other professional healthcare provider. This information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, however changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information.

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