



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# The safe use and disposal of sharps

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Adapted for use in self-care/shared care and home  
haemodialysis

**Renal Medicine**

① For more information, please contact:  
The Home Haemodialysis Specialist Nurses  
Tel: 01904 724145



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# **Introduction**

This information has been written to help reduce the risk of injury from sharps.

It applies to all patients and carers who are taking part in Haemodialysis Shared Care, who are dialysing in self-care units and to home haemodialysis patients.

Specific tasks are inserting and removing dialysis needles, and giving injections such as lidocaine, heparin, EPO (Aranesp) and Venofer.

## **Why do we need this information?**

Extreme care must be taken when using sharps and disposing of them after they have been used.

As well as the physical effects of a sharp injury, there is also the risk of getting a serious infection caused by blood borne viruses such as hepatitis.

Everyone using sharps has a responsibility to read this information and make sure they follow the instructions.

## What is a sharp?

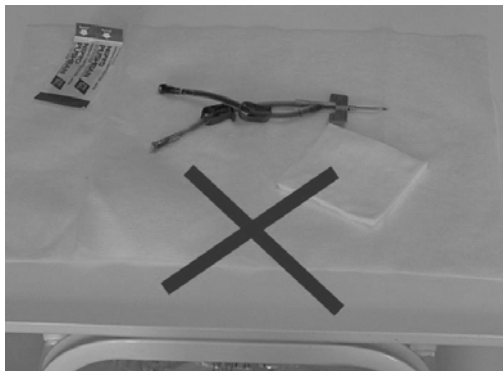
A sharp is anything that could puncture or graze the skin: needles, scissors, glass items and sharp ends of giving sets.

If you are not sure whether anything should be treated as a sharp, either ask a member of the nursing staff or treat the item as a sharp.



# General advice on using and disposing of sharps

1. If you have used a sharp, you are responsible for making sure it is disposed of safely.
2. All sharps must be disposed of immediately in a yellow sharps bin. They should not be placed on a trolley or table.
3. Used needles and syringes should be disposed of as a whole. The needle and syringe must not be separated before being disposed of.
4. Used needles must never be put back in their plastic cover (re-sheathed).



# The correct way to use a sharps bin

Sharps bins are yellow bins specially designed and marked for the disposal of sharps. No other type of container should be used.

The pictures below show examples of what sharps bins look like.



Sharps bins will be supplied by the hospital or by your home haemodialysis equipment supplier.

To assemble the sharps bin, press the lid onto the base all round the edge until it clicks into place.

Sign and date the label on the side of the bin, including where the bin is used – your postcode if at home.

After use, the opening in the lid of the bin should be closed but not locked. .



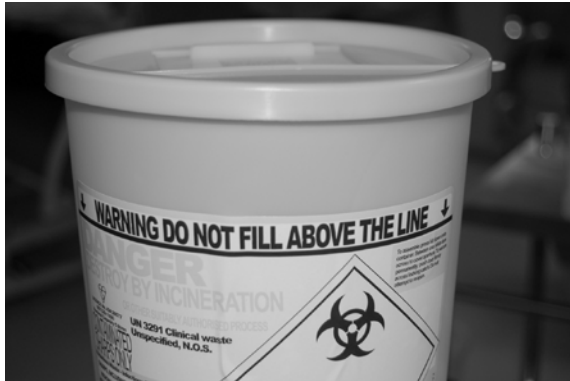
Never try to get anything back out of the sharps bin and never try to empty it.  
Do not put your fingers into the opening.





↓WARNING DO NOT FILL ABOVE THE LINE↓

The bin should not be filled over the black line.



When the bin is full close the opening in the lid until it clicks into the locked position.

Sign and date the label on the side.

# Disposal of full sharps bins

**Selby self-care patients** are responsible for securely closing and identifying filled bins and leaving them on top of the clinical waste bin for collection by Selby porters.

**Harrogate self-care patients** are responsible for securely closing and identifying filled bins and leaving them in the sluice for disposal by the Harrogate Renal Unit domestic team.

**At home** it is your responsibility to securely close and identify your bin before putting it out for collection as agreed with your local authority.

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## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Renal Specialist Nurse Team, The York Hospital,  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE,  
Telephone 01904 724145 or  
email [maggie.higginbotham@york.nhs.uk](mailto:maggie.higginbotham@york.nhs.uk).

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PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)

Owner	Maggie Higginbotham, Clinical Educator for Renal Services
Author	Collette Devlin, Nurse Educator Shared Haemodialysis Care
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