Proper Use and Disposal of Needles and Syringes
If you're one of the many people in Massachusetts who uses syringes to manage your health care at home, here's what you need to know about the safe use and disposal of needles, syringes and lancets (sharps).

Be Smart. Use a Sharps Container.
A sharps container is a single-use container that is filled with used medical needles and then disposed of safely. These can be purchased at pharmacies, medical supply stores or ordered through the mail. If you do not have access to a sharps container, place sharps in a puncture-resistant container such as a rigid plastic bottle or coffee can with a secure cap. These items must be disposed of at a drop-off site or through a medical mail back service.

DO Visit a medical supply store to purchase sharps containers.
DO Call the AIDS Action Committee Pharmacy Access Hotline to find out more about personal sharps containers.
1-800-988-5209
DO Check out these sharps mail back services. All provide a variety of container sizes and prepaid mailing cartons:
- Medesend 1-800-290-3581
- Stericycle 1-800-355-8773
- MWDC 1-866-910-3000
DO NOT Put sharps in the household trash. As of July 1, 2012, medical waste regulations will not allow the disposal of sharps in household garbage. Take your filled sharps container to the sharps disposal drop-off site in your community. (See attached disposal site list)

Be Aware.
Needles, syringes and sharps containers may not be thrown in the garbage or in recycling bins. See the attached list to find a disposal site for your community. If your community is not listed, please contact your local board of health for information.

Be Safe.
Reduce your risk of blood-borne diseases like hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.
DO Use a new needle every time you inject.
DO Clean the injection site with soapy water, alcohol swabs or rubbing alcohol.
DO Find out your HIV/viral hepatitis status. Get tested. If you are not infected you can stay that way. If you are, find out how to take care of yourself and avoid passing HIV/viral hepatitis to others.
DO Clean your sharps with bleach if you must reuse them.
DO NOT Inject in the same spot over and over again.
DO NOT Share needles, syringes, cookers, cotton or water.

COLLECTION SITE: West Newbury
Town Office Building
Board of Health
381 Main Street
West Newbury MA 01985
978-363-1100 ext 118

Safe and Possession of Hypodermic Syringes and Needles in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (M.G.L. chapter 94C, sections 27, 27A and 321):
- Individuals 18 years and older may legally purchase syringes and needles from a pharmacy without a prescription.
- Disposal of syringes must be done safely and responsibly.

State Sanitary Code:
(M.G.L. chapter 111, section 127A)
Improper disposal of infectious or physically dangerous medical or biological waste may result in penalties of up to $25,000 or two years in a corrections facility.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health – August 2012
Proper Use and Disposal of Needles and Syringes
If you’re one of the many people in Massachusetts who uses syringes to manage your health care at home, Here’s what you need to know about the safe use and disposal of needles, syringes and injecting drug equipment (sharps).

Be Informed.
Resources are just a phone call away. All calls are confidential.

- AIDS Action Committee Hotline
  1-800-235-2331
  Referrals to confidential and anonymous HIV counseling and testing

- AIDS Action Committee
  Pharmacy Access Hotline
  1-800-686-5209

- Diabetes Services in Massachusetts
  617-624-5486

- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
  617-292-5500

- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
  617-624-6000, TTY/TDD 617-624-6001
  www.mass.gov/dph

- Massachusetts Hepatitis C Program
  1-888-443-HEPC (4372)
  www.mass.gov/dph/cd/cd/masshepc

- Massachusetts Substance Abuse Education Information and Helpline
  1-800-327-5050 TTY 617-536-5872
  www.helpline-online.com
  Information and confidential referrals to treatment and self-help groups

- Needle Exchange Programs (NEPs)
  You can exchange used syringes for new, sterile ones, be referred to medical help, drug treatment, testing for HIV and dispose of used syringes at any of these sites:

  Boston
  1-800-383-2437 or 617-534-3967

  Cambridge
  617-661-3040 or 617-680-1063

  Northampton
  413-586-0310 or 1-800-696-7752

  Provincetown
  508-487-3311 or 1-866-668-6448

  Needle Exchange is free to the public.

  Information on sharps drop-off sites is also available at:
  www.mass.gov/dph

Sale and Possession of Hypodermic Syringes and Needles
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