



## Handling Hemodialysis Waste



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### **Why worry about disposal of medical waste?**

Every year many people are seriously injured from contact with improperly discarded needles and medical waste in household garbage. Garbage disposal people are most at risk, but small children, pets and family members can also suffer harm from improperly discarded waste products. Proper storage and disposal of waste will protect members of your household and the general public from accidental injury.

### **What you can do to make your medical waste safe**

- After each dialysis your patient educator will show you how to drain the blood in the tubing and dialyzer to make it safe for handling.
- If your tubing and dialyzer are clotted, remove them from the machine and place them in the bio-hazard container you were given.
- Sharps (needles and other sharp objects) and medication vials should be placed in a sealable, hard plastic container. Syringes filled with blood can also be disposed in the sharps container you were given.
- Store all medical waste in a child-proof/animal-proof container. If you store your waste outside, please make sure the container is tightly secured.
- Use sturdy garbage bags as some garbage bags break easily. This can attract animals and put the garbage disposal people at risk.



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### **How to dispose of your tubing and dialyzer after dialysis**

Refer to your Gambro training manual, Section 9:5, or your flip chart. Your patient educator will teach you how to rinse your bloodlines with a cup of vinegar or acid from your used dialysate jug. The acid will mask the smell of blood which will help keep animals away from your garbage.

### **How to dispose of your tubing if there is still blood in it**

If your tubing clots while on dialysis, do not try to return blood.

1. Clamp all lines including saline.
2. Turn time to 0:00.
3. Press **Rinseback**.
4. Remove lines from priming detector.
5. Disconnect venous and arterial lines from needles or CVC.
6. Attach lines to the end of a transducer, medication port or circle connector.  
This will make a closed circuit and stop any leakage.
7. Remove needles or flush CVC. Dispose of needles in sharps container.
8. Remove tubing from machine and place it into the bio-hazard waste container you were given by your patient educator.
9. Call your patient educator to report blood loss.
10. Bring your bio-hazard waste container to your patient educator or to the nearest medical centre for safe disposal.



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### How to dispose of your sharps

You will be given a sharps/biohazard container. The container is a hard, re-sealable plastic container that is puncture resistant.

This is the recommended safe storage unit for your used needles and syringes.

The following items are considered sharps:

- Needles
- Medication vials or ampoules
- Vacutainer needles (both green and blue)
- IV spikes (i.e. saline IV lines)

The syringe and needle should be thrown away as one unit. Do not attempt to remove, bend, break or re-cap a needle. If you use a needle to withdraw medication or saline, it still must be placed in the sharps container.

Once the sharps container is full bring it to your monthly clinic and your patient educator will dispose of it safely. Make sure the lid is on tight and wipe the outside of the container clean of all blood. This will help protect staff.

### What you can recycle

The following items can generally be placed in your recycling bin.

- Acid containers (well rinsed)
- Plastic bags
- Paper from packaging (e.g. gauze packages, backing of packages)
- Cardboard packaging from syringes, gauze, etc.
- Cardboard boxes
- Emptied BiCart®

Please check with your municipality for what materials it accepts for recycling.

**Remember: NEVER PLACE MEDICAL WASTE OR CONTAINERS OF MEDICAL WASTE IN RECYCLING BINS**

