

# Module 12 – Handling Hemodialysis Waste

## Why worry about 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 educator will show you how to make your used dialysis tubing 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.

## 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)



**Important to remember:  
NEVER PLACE MEDICAL  
WASTE OR CONTAINERS  
OF MEDICAL WASTE IN  
RECYCLING BINS.**

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:

- Plastic bags
- Paper from packaging (e.g. gauze packages, backing of packages)
- Cardboard packaging from syringes, gauze, etc.
- Cardboard boxes
- For some machines acid and bicarbonate containers (well rinsed)

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

## Disposal of Hemodialysis Waste

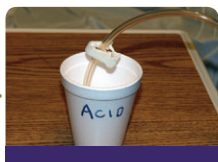


Used dialysis tubing and dialyzers can be thrown out with your household garbage—but only *after* you make it safe for collection.

Follow these steps after every treatment.



1. Disconnect from dialysis. Hold AVF sites or cap catheter lines.



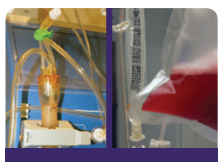
2. Place arterial blood line into one cup of acid (K bath) and attach venous blood line to waste bag.



3. Allow arterial blood line to take up the acid. When all acid has been taken up, keep the pump running and allow air to be sucked into the circuit.



4. When the AIR DETECT alarm sounds the pump will stop. Press priming twice and then restart the pump.



5. Allow lines to completely empty into waste bag (at least 2 minutes) and then stop the blood pump.



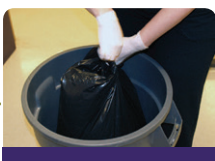
6. Drain the dialysate out of the dialyzer.



7. Drain waste bag into toilet.



8. Put used lines and dialyzer into double-bagged, heavy duty black garbage bags.



9. Store in an area away from domestic animals or wildlife and dispose with household garbage in a sealable container.



10. It is *never* okay to put needles in the garbage. Always use your sharps container.

You can download this sheet at [www.bcrenalagency.ca](http://www.bcrenalagency.ca).

Click: Health Info → Managing My Care → Home Hemodialysis → Resources for Current Patients → Patient Tools

