

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.

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.

HOW DO I DISPOSE OF OTHER EQUIPMENT?

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.

Any equipment used with chemotherapy medicines (cytotoxic and some other medicines) should be sealed in a plastic bag, and then placed in normal rubbish for disposal.

MEDICATION	Tablets, capsules, mixtures, creams, inhalers or patches	Return to any pharmacy
EQUIPMENT	Gloves, plastic medicine cups, syringes, empty medicine containers and empty blister packs	Rinse containers and put in the normal household rubbish bin
	Gloves, plastic medicine cups, syringes, empty medicine containers and empty blister packs used with cytotoxic medicines	Seal these containers and other equipment in a plastic bag, and then put in normal household rubbish bin
SHARPS When three quarters full, seal the containers and return to the hospital pharmacy or local community pharmacy for disposal	Needles with a CYTOTOXIC 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.

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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