

Primary care sharps bin prescribing guidance

Sharps are items (or parts of items) that could cause cuts or puncture wounds. These include:

- needles
- syringes with needles attached
- pre-filled syringes with needles
- scalpel and other blades
- broken glass ampoules
- the patient end of an infusion set.

Where an individual administers their own medication at home, they should be supplied with a sharps bin¹. These can be prescribed on an FP10 prescription. The individual should be advised of the local disposal options. The local council can be contacted for current advice for a specific locality.

If the medicine is supplied via homecare, the contract should have provision for the collection of waste medication and sharps.

Types of sharps bins

Sharps contaminated with pharmaceutical waste can be divided into two broad groups²:

1. sharps contaminated with pharmaceutical hazardous (cytotoxic and cytostatic) waste
2. sharps contaminated with pharmaceutical non-hazardous (non-cytotoxic and non-cytostatic) waste

Pharmaceutical hazardous waste – Purple lidded sharps bin

Sharps contaminated with cytotoxic or cytostatic products should be placed a purple lidded sharps bin for disposal.








Pharmaceutical non-hazardous waste – Yellow lidded sharps bin

Sharps contaminated with pharmaceuticals that are not cytotoxic or cytostatic products should be placed in yellow lidded sharps bin for disposal by incineration.

[Managing Controlled Drugs \(CD\) waste](#) contains further information about what to do if the sharps contains a CD.

¹ [Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe and sustainable management of healthcare waste \(england.nhs.uk\)](#) (Accessed February 2024)

² Specialist pharmacy Service (SPS). Managing sharps contaminated with pharmaceutical waste. <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/managing-sharps-contaminated-with-pharmaceutical-waste/> (Accessed February 2024).

Sharps bin	Formulary brand	Size	Cost (Drug Tariff Feb 2024)	Cost/litre	Suitable for
Sharps should be placed in the correct colour bin and disposed of safely within 3 months of first use.					
LARGE	Sharpsguard <i>Daniels Healthcare</i>	5 Litre 	£1.60	£0.32	For regular users of injectables e.g., insulin and insulin pumps. For disposal of CGM sensors and sensor applicators.
MEDIUM	Sharpsafe <i>Frontier medical group</i>	1.8 Litre 	£1.45	£0.81	For patients who are occasionally injecting e.g., used GLP-1 pens, Dalteparin. Also, for patients who only monitor blood glucose for disposal of used lancets.
LARGE	Sharpsafe <i>Frontier medical group</i>	4 Litre 	£3.09	£0.77	For regular users of injectables e.g., insulin and insulin pumps. For disposal of CGM sensors and sensor applicators.
SMALL	Sharpsafe <i>Frontier medical group</i>	1 Litre 	£1.07	£1.07	For patients who only monitor blood glucose for disposal of used lancets (1.8L could be considered as more cost-effective alternative) 1 Litre bins not suitable for 'safety' needles or 'safety' lancets (bin opening not big enough).
SMALL	Sharpsguard <i>Daniels Healthcare</i>	1 Litre 	£1.13	£1.13	For patients who only monitor blood glucose for disposal of used lancets (1.8L could be considered as more cost-effective alternative) 1 Litre bins not suitable for 'safety' needles or 'safety' lancets (bin opening not big enough).
CYTOTOXICS LARGE	Sharpsguard <i>Daniels Healthcare</i>	5 Litre 	£1.60	£0.32	For disposal of used cytotoxic needles and syringes e.g., methotrexate
CYTOTOXICS MEDIUM	Sharpsafe <i>Frontier medical group</i>	1.8 Litre 	£1.45	£0.81	

NON-FORMULARY	Sharpsafe <i>Frontier medical group</i>	7 Litre 9 Litre	7, 8 and 9 Litre bins are not on the Kent and Medway formulary. Prescribe most cost effective 5 Litre or 1.8 Litre sharps bins as above.
NON-FORMULARY	Sharpsafety	8 Litre	

Table adapted for use in Kent and Medway with kind permission of NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Frontier Medical Group - <https://www.frontier-group.co.uk> Tel 01495 235 800 info@frontier-group.co.uk

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