

Clinical waste in the home

Information and guidance on how to dispose
of your clinical waste at home



What is clinical waste?

Clinical waste refers to any waste that consists wholly or partly of:

- Human or animal tissue
- Excretions
- Swabs or dressings
- Blood or bodily fluids
- Drugs or other pharmaceutical products
- Sharps including: syringes, needles or other sharp instruments

Additional care must be taken in disposing of this type of waste from the home and must be treated in the following way:

- Household clinical waste bags and sharps bins must be sealed to prevent accidental injury to the collector.
- Needles, sharp instruments and aerosol cans must be kept out of household clinical waste bags.
- Unwanted medicines and pills must be returned to a pharmacy for safe disposal.

Arranging collection of household clinical waste

- Use this guide to decide what waste you have and how to dispose of it.
- If your clinical waste can be placed into a black bag please just double bag this and place out with your weekly household waste at your usual collection point.
- If you have household clinical waste which needs to be collected in a yellow or orange bag or a sharps box, please contact us to arrange a separate clinical waste collection.
- Your clinical waste collection may be on a different day to your standard rubbish collection, and we will agree a specific collection point at your property for this waste.

Which bag or container should I use?

Offensive household clinical waste

- Gloves and aprons
- Incontinence pads
- Disposable nappies
- Non-infectious dressings
- Catheter bags
- Syringes used for food products
- Sanitary towels



Black bag

Use a black bag if you have **less than one third of a bag**. The waste should be double wrapped and disposed of with other household waste.



Tiger bag

Use a tiger bag if the amount is **greater than one third** of a black bag.

Infectious household clinical waste

Any medical treatment waste likely to infect others.

- All treatment waste contaminated with bodily fluids
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- HIV/Hep B contamination
- Infectious dressings



Orange bag

Orange bags should not have any items contaminated by medicine in them.

Cytotoxic or Cytostatic household clinical waste (waste from chemotherapy or hormone treatment)

All items that could have the following hazardous properties:

- Toxic
- Carcinogenic
- Mutagenic
- Toxic for reproduction
- Waste contaminated by medicines, including:
 - Personal protective equipment (gloves, masks and gowns)
 - Syringe bodies and tubing

If you are unsure please check with your healthcare provider or pharmacy.



Yellow bag with purple stripe

Anything which can puncture the skin and may be contaminated with blood or other bodily fluid

- Empty Medicine bottles and cartridges of insulin
- Finger prick lancets and platforms
- Pen-needles
- Blades
- Glass ampoules
- Needles and syringes



Sharps bin

(lid and label can be yellow, orange or purple)

Handling and storage

If you produce:

- More than one third of each black bag of “offensive” household clinical waste;
- “Cytotoxic/Cytostatic” or “infectious” household clinical waste;

Then please note it is important to separate these clinical wastes from your household black bag waste.

Also:

- Avoid direct contact with the waste.
- Store waste in approved household clinical waste bags or sharps containers away from children.
- bags must be no more than three quarters full (5kg max weight) and tied/sealed at the neck.

Special arrangements for sharps disposal

- Sharps include: syringes, needles and sharp medical instruments.
- Place sharps only in an approved sharps bin and never loose in a bag or any other container.
- In the event of accident or injury involving sharps seek medical advice immediately and safely dispose of the item in the approved way.

Tourists and temporary residents

We can also arrange collections for visitor households and temporary residents in Cornwall. Please contact us for more information.

Supply of sacks and boxes

Household clinical waste bags can be obtained by contacting us via the details on the back of this leaflet. Sharps containers are supplied by your healthcare provider or pharmacy; Cornwall Council do not provide these.

Contact us

For further advice and guidance on the clinical waste collection service please email us at:

refuseandrecycling@cornwall.gov.uk

Or call us on:

0300 1234 141

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall,
Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY

e: equality@cornwall.gov.uk

t: 0300 1234 100