

According to Tom Erickson, CEO of UltiMed, a manufacturer of insulin syringes and pen needles, only 5 percent of home-use sharps in the United States are disposed of in approved containers at designated drop-of sites. The remainder winds up in household trash.

This is a product segment that will see considerable growth as governments at all levels move to reduce the amount of sharps in the nation's waste stream. (To see various state laws regarding sharps disposal, go to www.ulticare.com/state-disposal-guidelines/)

Manufacturers

BEMIS/STERICYCLE

<http://www.stericycle.com/sharps-disposal-containers>

The company's sharps container suppliers include name brands, such as Bemis/Stericycle, BD, Hospitec, and Kendall.

BD

www.bd.com/us/

BD's Home Sharps Container is for insulin syringes, pen needles, and lancets. It can hold 70-100 insulin syringes or up to 300 pen needles. Leak- and puncture-resistant. Snap lock lid.

MEDLINE

www.medline.com/category/Sharps-Containers/cat1470091

Medline sells its own line of sharps containers, as well as containers from other sources, such as Kendall, Becton Dickinson (BD), and Sharps Compliance, Inc.

SHARPS COMPLIANCE, INC.

www.sharpsinc.com/

Sharps Compliance offers a unique mail-back program where self-injectors can dispose of their sharps in containers provided by the company and then mail them safely back to the manufacturer. The program eliminates worries about where to find authorized disposal sites.

ULTIMED

www.ulticare.com/

Under its UltiCare unit, UltiMed sells the UltiGuard® Safe Pack, which comes packed with 100 pen needles or syringes. Once a needle has been used, the user pops it in the top, where it drops and rolls safely out the way, eliminating the need for a separate sharps container.

Sizes and Types

Sharps containers range from single-use shuttles to large multi-gallon containers used in hospital and institutional settings.

Smaller-capacity containers, usually with capacities measured in less than a gallon, are aimed at the home-user and self-injectors. A typical example would be BD's Home Sharps Container for insulin syringes, pen needles, and lancets. It can hold 70-100 insulin syringes or up to 300 pen needles. Leak- and puncture-resistant. Snap lock lid.

Where to Buy Them

Almost every U.S. and Canadian pharmacy can special-order sharps containers for its customers.

Google searches for "sharps containers" or "sharps disposal" will bring up several different manufacturer product lines and contact information for online ordering or local pharmacy outlets.

Mail-order site Amazon also has a wide range of sharps container options.

ULINE (www.uline.com/BL_6712/Sharps-Containers?keywords=sharps+containers), which specializes in Kendall sharps containers, is a notable mail-order supplier. Mail-order site Amazon also has a wide range of sharps container options.

Printer-friendly charts are available at www.DiabetesHealth.com/charts