

Syringe Litter: Know the Risks and Prevent Injury

Syringe litter is a concern for all New Yorkers. New York City is working to clean up syringe litter and educate community members about how to get rid of syringes safely and prevent needlestick injury (being pricked by a syringe).

Getting a blood-borne disease due to a needlestick injury from a discarded syringe is very unlikely to happen.

- In the U.S., there have been no known cases of HIV transmission due to a needlestick injury from a discarded syringe.
- In the U.S., there have been very rare cases of hepatitis B and C transmission due to a needlestick injury from a discarded syringe.
 - Children and adults in New York who receive routine vaccinations are fully protected against hepatitis B.
 - There is no hepatitis C vaccine, but transmission due to a needlestick injury from a discarded syringe is extremely unlikely.

If you have concerns about syringe litter:

- Wear shoes with tough soles.
- Teach children to **not** touch or pick up syringes.

If someone is pricked by a discarded syringe:

- Wash the area immediately with soap and water.
- Call a health care provider for guidance or go to an emergency room for evaluation as soon as possible.
 - Look at the syringe to see if it contains blood, if possible — do **not** touch the needle. A health care provider might ask this to decide what treatment is needed.

If you pick up a discarded syringe:

- Wear gloves and use tongs or a dustpan.
- Place the syringe in a sharps container or hard plastic bottle with a secure lid, such as a laundry detergent bottle.
- Wash your hands with soap and disinfect the equipment you used to pick up the syringe.
- **Do not** throw the syringe in the trash or down a drain (sewer).

**If you find
a syringe on
public property,
call 311.**

To find the nearest place to get rid of discarded syringes, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/health and search for **syringes**.

Help is available for people who use drugs. For free, confidential crisis counseling, mental health and substance use support, and referrals to care, call or text 988 or chat at nyc.gov/988. Counselors are available 24/7 by phone call in more than 200 languages.