

**Incineration is the preferred method of disposal for all biomedical and pharmaceutical wastes.\*  
Dispose of biomedical waste on a regular basis. Do not stockpile.**

## INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES

Staff handling biomedical waste should know and follow appropriate infection control procedures. Ensure that your practice has policies and procedures for proper storage, handling and disposal of biomedical waste and for post-exposure management.

## SEGREGATION

Keep the waste in a secure area, and allow access only to authorized personnel while awaiting transport to a disposal site.

## TRANSPORTATION

While en route to the disposal site, the transporter is responsible for waste security. All articles that must be decontaminated by heat sterilization (i.e., dressing trays) should be bagged and tagged when transported to a different location for sterilization.

## ISOLATION WASTE ('RISK GROUP 4'+)

Contact your regional health authority (RHA) public health service about disposing of waste that may be contaminated with high-risk agents (*Arenaviridae*, *Bunyaviridae*, *Filoviridae*, *Flaviviridae*, *Herpesviridae*, *Poxviridae*).

+Classification of human pathogens, maintained by the Office of Laboratory Security, Public Health Agency of Canada.  
See also *Occupational Health and Safety Code* explanation guide.

TYPE OF WASTE	DEFINED AS	PACKAGING & SAFETY	TREATMENT OR DISPOSAL REQUIRED
Sharps and surgical instruments	Needles, syringes, blades, lancets or laboratory glass capable of causing punctures or cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not recap waste needles.</li> <li>Use puncture-resistant, labeled containers (spill-proof, lockable lid) of materials that may be incinerated.</li> <li>Place sharps containers as close as possible to where sharps are used.</li> <li>Ensure workers use the sharps containers provided.</li> <li>Use only sharps containers that have a clearly defined fill line and are sturdy enough to resist puncture under normal conditions of use and handling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b></li> <li><b>Note: Sharps in home settings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When local bylaw allows, sharps from home settings may be sent to approved sanitary landfills in puncture-resistant containers marked Not for Recycling.</li> <li>When local bylaw prohibits disposal in household waste, take sharps in a puncture-resistant container to a hazardous waste station (Eco Station) or check with local pharmacies or Environmental Public Health Services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Microbiological	Laboratory diagnostic specimens, cultures, live or attenuated vaccines and laboratory material that comes into contact with any of these items	Place in impervious waste bags (strong plastic or double-bagged).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b> OR</li> <li><b>Decontamination</b> (by autoclave or method approved by RHA public health service) <b>and disposal to an approved sanitary landfill.</b></li> </ul>
Pathological and anatomical	Human tissues, organs, body parts, products of conception ( <i>Note: hair, nails and teeth are not considered biomedical waste</i> )	Place in sealed impervious containers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b> OR</li> <li><b>For religious/cultural reasons, may be buried.</b></li> </ul>
Soft waste	Dressings, sponges, gloves, drapes, equipment or other soft material saturated with blood or purulent discharge	Place in impervious waste bags (strong plastic or double-bagged).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b> OR</li> <li><b>Disposal to an approved sanitary landfill.</b></li> </ul>
Blood and body fluids	Human blood and blood products, body fluids contaminated with blood and fluids removed for diagnosis during surgery or treatment ( <i>Note: excludes urine, feces, tears or saliva unless contaminated with visible blood</i> )	Place in sealed impervious containers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b> OR</li> <li><b>Check if your municipality permits disposal into sanitary sewer.</b></li> </ul>
Drugs and pharmaceuticals		Set outdated samples aside in a box or bag.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>INCINERATION*</b> OR</li> <li><b>Some pharmacies will dispose of drugs and pharmaceuticals.</b></li> </ul>

# For More Information

## Disposal of waste in your area

- Contact your municipality directly. Local waste bylaws differ from one community to the next in terms of what is permitted.
- Landfills and incineration facilities are designed for different levels of operation. Facilities that accept biomedical waste must meet specific environmental requirements. Check with your municipality – a municipality can refuse waste if deemed to have an adverse effect upon safe facility operations.

## Biomedical waste guidelines and recommended practices

REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES	OFFICE	PHONE
Aspen Regional Health	Medical Officer of Health	780.967.6844 (#264)
Calgary Health Region	Office of the Medical Officer of Health	403.943.1280
Capital Health	Environmental Public Health Services	780.413.7927
	Communicable Disease Control	780.413.7948
	Needlestick Response Team	780.480.6598
Chinook Health Region	Medical Officer of Health	403.388.6014
David Thompson Health Region	Environmental Public Health	403.341.2155
East Central Health	Public Health Inspection	780.842.4077
Northern Lights Health Region	Environmental Health Services	780.791.6078
Palliser Health Region	Environmental Health Services	403.502.8205
	Medical Officer of Health	403.502.8208
Peace Country Health	Environmental Health Program	780.513.7516
	Medical Officer of Health	780.513.7531