

## Guidance for prescribing of disposable pen needles



There are currently a wide variety of disposable pen needles available to be prescribed for patients using insulin pens/cartridges and GLP-1 analogue pens. This guidance sets out recommendations for prescribers to support cost effective prescribing.

### Key Messages

Clinical message	Cost effective message
4, 5, 6 and 8mm needles are the recommended sizes locally	BHR CCGs spends approximately £375k on disposable pen needles annually
For adults there is no clinical Justification for recommending pen needles longer than 8mm	<b>GlucoRx CarePoint</b> <b>Omnican Fine</b> <b>TriCare</b> <b>BD Viva</b> <b>Neon Verifine and Neon Verifine Ultra</b> are the approved cost effective brands (see table overleaf). They have been selected based on cost (less than £4.50 per 100 needles) and compatibility with all insulin pen devices.
For children and adolescents there is no clinical Justification for using pen needles longer than 6mm	
Using pen needles of shorter length (6mm or less) helps to prevent IM injection of insulin. IM injection of all human insulin should be avoided as unpredictable blood glucose levels and severe hypoglycaemia can result.	Pen needles should be prescribed by brand
The gauge is a measure of thickness of a needle - the higher the gauge, the thinner the needle. Gauges range from 29 (thickest) to 32 (thinnest)	Safety pen needles which incorporate automatic safety locks should NOT be prescribed by GP practices except for patient(s) who have their injectable medicine(s) administered to them by a non-clinical worker e.g. school staff or social care worker
Patients requiring pen needles should be prescribed sharps disposable container, to safely dispose of used needles	
All pen needles are for single use only	

Approved cost effective pen needles for pre-filled and reusable pen injectors			
Pen Needle	Size/weight	Cost/100	Compatibility with devices
 <b>Glucorx CarePoint</b>	4mm/31 gauge 5mm/31 gauge 6mm/31 gauge 8mm/31 gauge	£3.95	All device types <a href="https://www.glucorx.co.uk/our-products/insulin-needles/">https://www.glucorx.co.uk/our-products/insulin-needles/</a>
 <b>Omnican Fine</b>	4mm/32 gauge 5mm/32 gauge 6mm/32 gauge	£3.95	All device types <a href="https://www.bbraun.com/en/products/b0/omnican-fine.html">https://www.bbraun.com/en/products/b0/omnican-fine.html</a>
 <b>TriCare</b>	4mm/32 gauge 5mm/31 gauge 6mm/31 gauge 8mm/31 gauge	£3.95	All device types <a href="http://agamatrix.co.uk/products/tricare-pen-needles/">http://agamatrix.co.uk/products/tricare-pen-needles/</a>
 <b>BD Viva</b>	4mm/32 gauge 5mm/31 gauge 6mm/31 gauge 8mm/31 gauge	£4.04 (Only Available in packs of 90 costing £3.64)	All device types <a href="https://www.bd.com/en-uk/products/diabetes/diabetes-products/pen-needles/viva-pen-needles">https://www.bd.com/en-uk/products/diabetes/diabetes-products/pen-needles/viva-pen-needles</a>
 <b>Neon Verifine</b> <b>Neon Verifine Ultra</b>	4mm/31 gauge 5mm/31 gauge 6mm/31 gauge 8mm/31 gauge 4mm/32 gauge	£4.50	All device types <a href="http://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk/verifine.html">http://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk/verifine.html</a>

Approved by BHR CCGs Area Prescribing sub-Committees Dec 2017  
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## Sharps Disposal

### Key message

Patients requiring pen needles should be prescribed sharps disposable container, to safely dispose of used needles

Every person who injects insulin/GLP-1 analogue should be provided with the correct means of safe disposal of their sharps, i.e. pen needles, syringes and lancets.

Needles should be safely disposed of immediately after use and not left attached to the pen. Pen needles need to be removed from pens to prevent the entry of air (or other contaminants) into the cartridge as well as the leakage of medication out of the cartridge, which can affect subsequent dose accuracy. Patients requiring pen needles should be prescribed sharps disposable container, to safely dispose of used needles, for the recommended options see the table below.

Sharps disposable container	Size	Nov 17 drug tariff price
 <b>Sharpsafe</b>	1 litre 1.8 litre	£0.85 £1.15
 <b>Sharpsguard</b>	1 litre 5 litre	£0.86 £1.21

Disposal of the sharps box is now provided by a company called Medisort to patients living in Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. Contact no: **0330 122 4220** (see Appendix A for patient information):

## Safety pen needles

### Key message

Safety pen needles which incorporate automatic safety locks should NOT be prescribed by GP practices except for a patient who is having their injectable medicine(s) administered to them by a non-clinical worker e.g. school staff or social care worker

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued regulations – (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 on the use of safer sharps - which came into effect on 11 May 2013. These state that 'employers must substitute traditional, unprotected medical sharps with a 'safer sharp' where it is reasonably practicable to do so'. Safety pen needles are medical sharps which incorporate features or mechanisms to prevent or minimise the risk of accidental injury.

Safety pen needles which incorporate automatic safety locks are available, but should NOT be prescribed by GP practices outside of the agreed exceptions. These are for the benefit of healthcare workers to avoid needle stick injury and therefore they should not be prescribed on an NHS prescription. It is the responsibility of relevant healthcare employers (occupational health) to ensure that healthcare workers use safer sharps where possible to restrict the practice of recapping needles and placing sharps bin close to the point of use. Prescribing of safety pen needles should also be restricted for patients who have their injectables administered to them by family or friends.

### Exception

Prescribing of safety pen needles is only permitted for a patient who is having their injectable medicine(s) administered to them by a non-clinical worker e.g. school staff, social care workers.

NB patients where this exception applies should also be prescribed a normal formulary choice pen needle for use at home where appropriate.

### References

- The November 2017 Electronic Drug Tariff
- FIT UK Forum for injection technique UK, Diabetes Care in the UK. The UK Injection Technique recommendations 3rd edition
- PrescQIPP, Hypodermic insulin devices for patients with type 2 diabetes - B103I. July 2015
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/needlesticks/eu-directive.htm>

This guidance is adapted from guidance issued from NHS Mid-Essex and Wandsworth CCGs.

## Where do I take any unused medicines that contain a sharp and / or a filled sharps bin?

Disposal of the sharps box is now provided by a company called Medisort to patients living in Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. To arrange for a collection (free of charge) from your home call: **0330 122 4220**

## How can I get a new sharps bin?

You can get a new sharps bin by making a request to your GP Practice who will issue you with a prescription. You can take this prescription to your usual Pharmacy who will order and supply you with a sharps bin.

## What size sharps bin do I need?

A **1 litre sharps bin** is most suitable for those who are testing their blood glucose and have **lancets** or a **short course of injections** to dispose of. A **5 litre sharps bin** is most suitable for those who have **lancets, insulin pen needles, syringes and insulin pump tubing & cannulas** to dispose of.

## Appendix A

# Sharps Disposal

## Patient Information Leaflet



You have been given a sharps bin for you to safely dispose of used needles, syringes, lancets called 'sharps' in your home.

This leaflet contains helpful hints on how you can do this safely.

**It is your responsibility to safely dispose of sharps and your sharps**

Produced with thanks to Health Service Executive (HSE)

**KEEP SHARPS BOX & SHARPS OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN**

## Why do I need a Sharps bin?

You need to dispose (get rid) of your used needles, syringes and lancets (called 'sharps') in a sharps bin as they can injure people and carry infections.

## Sharps Bins

Sharps bins are specially designed yellow containers. You can get small and large sharps bins. The large bins come with a lid that **must** be attached securely before using the bin.



## Do

Do only use a sharps bin to get rid of your 'sharps' which include:

- needles,
- syringes,
- lancets,
- insulin pump tubing,
- cannulas & cannula insertion devices,
- used blood thinning medicines e.g. Enoxaparin syringes,
- used diabetes medicines e.g. Glucagon Like Peptide -1 pens (GLP-1)



Do use a needle clipper - if recommended by a health professional. (Needle clippers are available on prescription.)

Do keep sharps bins in a safe place and out of reach of children & pets.

Do store the sharps bins in a cupboard and keep away from food.

Do use the temporary closure on the lid after each use, as this prevents the contents spilling when it is not in use.

Do get a sharps bin from your Vet if you need one to dispose of sharps used in pet care.

## Don't

Don't put your used needles, syringes and lancets in any other container such as drinks cans or used plastic food containers.



Don't put any other waste in the sharps bin i.e.

- cotton wool balls,
- test strips,
- finished insulin pen devices. In general, these can be disposed of as household waste provided that the needle has been removed.

Don't put the sharps bin out with your household waste.

Don't try to remove a needle or lancet from the sharps bin.

Don't force sharps into a full bin by pushing down with your hands.

Don't fill the sharps bin so that it is too heavy to lift.

Don't keep your sharps bins in use for longer than 3 months. It should be exchanged regardless of how full it is.

Don't fill the container past the dotted black fill line.



## When the sharps bin reaches the dotted black fill line.

### 1. Lock

Close the opening to permanent closure.

### 2. Complete the Label

Write your GP Practice, your name, and date started.

