



Handling Needles & How to Relieve Anxiety Around Needles

As a caregiver, you may be required to handle or give needles.

Needles can be dangerous because they can injure people and spread disease. Needles are considered hazardous waste due to the blood aspect. See our other Careguides on proper disposal, such as “Proper Disposal of Home Medical Waste.” Here are some do’s and don’ts of handling needles:

Do’s	Don’ts
Do place needles in “Sharps” box immediately after use.	Don’t recap the needle! (You could stab yourself.)
Do keep the ‘Sharps’ container out of reach from children and pets.	Don’t throw needles in the trash.
Do label and separate syringes so you know which ones are which and where to give the injections.	Don’t flush them down the toilet.
Do call your pharmacy for new “Sharps” box when the old one is halfway full.	Don’t try to remove the needle part yourself.
	Don’t bend or break the needle.
	Don’t put needles in recycling bins.
	Don’t overflow the “Sharps” box with needles.

If the person you care for is nervous around needles, here are tips to relieve their anxiety:

- Relax by deep breathing
- Relax the area where you are having the injection; don’t tense up
- Distract your mind with other thoughts.
- Vacation, errand—think of anything else
- Distract yourself with a show or music
- Talk and ask questions
- Have someone there for support if needed
- Don’t look at the needle; focus on an object rather than the needle
- If you are fearful of the pain, numb the area first with ice or a frozen spoon
- Remind yourself or others that with practice and time, anxiety can subside