Disposing of Medical Waste
A Quick-Reference Guide
As a client receiving care at home you and your family/caregiver are responsible for disposing of medical waste such as sharps and needles, contaminated solid wastes, chemotherapy medications and supplies, and other medications including narcotics. This brief guide provides tips for the safe handling and disposal of these items.

**Sharps and Needles**

Any object that could break, cut or puncture the skin is considered to be a ‘sharp’, including needles (with and without syringes attached), lancets, blades, and intact and broken vials.
To dispose of sharps safely:

• **Use a special biomedical/sharps waste container.** Some pharmacies may accept needles and sharps in approved sharps containers. (Some pharmacies may ask you to use their specific container type.) When the container is full, it must be returned to the pharmacy where it will then be transported to a government-approved facility for disposal. Your local municipality will also have household waste depots.

• Do **not** put sharps containers into regular household garbage or recycling boxes.

Contact your local pharmacy or municipal office for further information.
Contaminated Solid Waste

Dressings, gauze, bandages, swabs, catheter tubing, intravenous bags and tubing (with needles removed) or any other products soiled with blood or bodily fluids must be disposed appropriately. Follow these steps:

- Place the soiled products in a plastic bag and tie it at the top. If the first bag is visibly soiled, double-bag the items and place them with your regular household garbage.

- In the case of intravenous bags, remove and dispose of any tubing from the pump before returning the pump to the supplier.
Chemotherapy Medications and Supplies

Chemotherapy medications and any supplies that have come into contact with chemotherapy medications are considered to be contaminated. These include intravenous tubing, needles, syringes and dressing supplies. To dispose of them:

• You must use the biomedical waste container that came with your Champlain CCAC medical supplies.

• When your container is full, please advise your visit nurse. The nurse will complete a request for the pickup of the waste container, which will then be transported to a government-approved facility for disposal.
• Do not put this type of biomedical waste in regular household garbage for pick up.

**NOTE:** It is important to always wash your hands after touching contaminated wastes. Wash vigorously with soap, water and lots of friction.

**Medications Including Narcotics**

Unused or out-of-date medications must be returned to your local pharmacy. To dispose of medications:

• Some **pharmacies may ask you to use a specific container they provide**. Contact your local pharmacy for further information.
• Follow the instructions under Chemotherapy Medications and Supplies for disposing of chemotherapy medications.

• Do not flush medications down the toilet.

To reach your Care Coordinator please call 1-800-538-0520 or 310-CCAC (2222), or consult our website: www.champlainccac.ca.

The information in this pamphlet is intended to help clients and their caregivers protect themselves, others and the environment from hazardous or infectious medical waste. Although reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, it is not warranted and is subject to changes in law or regulation.
About the Champlain CCAC

The Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) is one of the largest health service providers in eastern Ontario, connecting people to care in a region covering over 18,000 sq. km.

Every year, the Champlain CCAC assists thousands of people in diverse communities to navigate a complex health system. The CCAC supports clients in a variety of settings through injury, illness and the complications of aging or disability by connecting them to community based services and other resources. Our Client Care Coordination teams help develop care plans for people of all ages, focused on maintaining independence and dignity at home. When required, the CCAC also provides guidance through the application and admission processes to long-term care facilities.

For more information call 310 CCAC (2222), or 1-800-538-0520, or visit: www.champlainccac.ca. For additional information on community services and educational resources please go to: www.champlainhealthline.ca.