



## Guideline Statement

Registered Dietitians (RDs) have the authority to perform the controlled act of skin pricking for the purpose of collecting blood samples for monitoring capillary blood readings while practicing dietetics. RDs must ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to perform the act safely and competently. They are also responsible for understanding and applying the municipal laws and facility protocols regarding the appropriate disposal of biomedical wastes such as the lancets used for skin pricking.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of these guidelines is to inform RDs about the legal requirements for the safe and effective disposal of biomedical waste and infection control protocols associated with skin pricking.

## FOLLOW FACILITY PROTOCOLS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF BIOMEDICAL WASTE

RDs are required to follow their organization's occupational health and safety policies and procedures to reduce the risk of exposure to infection when handling biomedical and other wastes. This includes waste derived from RDs performing skin pricks for monitoring capillary blood readings.

Used lancets are a biomedical waste categorized as sharps.<sup>2</sup> Registered Dietitians and facility staff who handle and dispose of used lancets (e.g., custodial staff who collect garbage) risk exposure to infection. RDs must follow Ministry guidelines for the safe disposal of used lancets (page 2).

Where there are concerns about unsafe practices for the disposal of sharps, RDs should address these questions and advocate for changes within their workplace.

Biomedical waste includes:

- “(a) human anatomical waste,
- (b) human blood waste,
- (c) animal anatomical waste,
- (d) animal blood waste,
- (e) microbiology laboratory waste,
- (f) sharps waste,
- (g) cytotoxic waste,
- (h) waste that has come into contact with human blood waste that is infected or suspected of being infected with any infectious substance (human), or
- (i) a waste containing or derived from one or more wastes described in clauses (a) through (h)...”

Human blood waste includes “waste consisting of,

- (a) liquid or semi-liquid human blood or blood products,
- (b) items saturated with liquid or semi-liquid human blood or blood products...”<sup>2</sup>

## MINISTRY GUIDELINES FOR DISPOSAL OF BIOMEDICAL WASTES

### Safe Disposal of Used Lancets

The Ministry of the Environment's [\*C-4: the Management of Biomedical Waste in Ontario\*](#) (2009), specifies that biomedical waste should not be placed in containers with other facility waste. To minimize the physical and biological hazards associated with waste sharps, lancets should be disposed of into puncture-resistant, leak-proof containers dedicated specifically for that purpose. The sharps container should have a lid which cannot be removed once it has been permanently closed. The sharps container must also be marked with the universal biohazards symbol and labelled "Biomedical Waste".<sup>2</sup>

All biomedical waste sharps containers should be colour-coded:

- (a) Red—where the biomedical waste is being transported to an incineration facility; or
- (b) Yellow—where the biomedical waste is being transported to a non-incineration facility.

### Disposal of Soiled Test Strips, Cotton Balls or Band Aids

The Ministry of Environment does not consider soiled test strips, cotton balls or band aids used during skin pricks to be biomedical waste. These items may be disposed of in regular garbage containers unless facility protocols dictate otherwise.

## MOBILE SCREENING & OTHER ATYPICAL SETTINGS

Where RDs are performing off-site public screening clinics or work in other atypical settings, sharps should be collected in an appropriate container and transported back to their workplace for disposal. Soiled test strips, cotton balls and band aids may be disposed of in regular garbage containers, unless the off-site facility dictates otherwise.

## PRIVATE PRACTICE RDS

Private practice RDs are responsible for taking steps to reduce the risk of exposure to infection by establishing and adhering to policies and procedures based on the most currently accepted clinical and occupational health and safety information.

Where RDs are performing skin pricks in their private practice, lancets must be disposed in a sharps container. Soiled test strips, cotton balls and band aids may be disposed of in regular garbage containers, unless local protocols dictate otherwise.

RDs are responsible for transporting biomedical waste sharps containers to a facility licensed appropriately under the *Environmental Protection Act*, or to a biomedical waste generation facility which is willing to accept transported biomedical waste and deal with it appropriately.<sup>2,3</sup>

## TRANSPORTING BIOMEDICAL WASTE

Prior to transportation, biomedical waste sharps containers should be sealed, locked or closed so that no waste is likely to be released or discharged during transport. Rigid containers with a non-removable lid do not require additional packaging or containment of the biomedical waste for off-site transportation. The container should be labelled and colour-coded as noted above under “Safe Disposal of Used Lancets”.

If an off-site facility directs RDs to transport soiled test strips, cotton balls and band aids back to their workplace for disposal, this should be done in a safe manner (e.g., in sealed containers or doubled-bagged garbage).

## INFECTION CONTROL

Registered Dietitians should take the time to educate themselves about infection control best practices to ensure they are following the most effective ways to reduce the spread of infections. They are encouraged to consult organizational infection control policies, the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee’s resource titled: [\*Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings\*](#),<sup>4</sup> as well as CDO’s [\*Control Guide for Registered Dietitians in Community Settings\*](#).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Dietetics Act, 1991. Professional Misconduct Regulation*, Ontario Regulation 680/93. s.34. [://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_930680\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_930680_e.htm)

<sup>2</sup> *Guideline C-4: The Management of Biomedical Waste in Ontario*. (2009). [://www.ene.gov.on.ca/publications/7397e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/publications/7397e.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Environmental Protection Act*. (1990). [Part V, Sections 4-7; Part XVII, Section 197]. [://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90e19\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90e19_e.htm)

<sup>4</sup> *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in all Health Care Settings*. (2009). Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. [://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/diseases/best\\_prac/bp\\_routine.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/diseases/best_prac/bp_routine.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *Infection Control Guide for Registered Dietitians in Community Settings*. (2006). [http://www.cdo.on.ca/en/pdf/Resources/Practice%20Standards%20&%20Resources/Workplace%20Issues/Infection%20Control%20Guide%20for%20RD%20\(Nov%202006\).pdf](http://www.cdo.on.ca/en/pdf/Resources/Practice%20Standards%20&%20Resources/Workplace%20Issues/Infection%20Control%20Guide%20for%20RD%20(Nov%202006).pdf)