

Clinical Waste FAQ – “What do we need to put in the purple-lidded bins?”

This seems to be quite topical so we’re covering this in the *GP Bulletin*. Purple-lidded clinical waste bins are used for cytotoxic or cytostatic waste.

Background

You may be aware that the definition of ‘cytotoxic’ and ‘cytostatic’ can be very broad and encompass a whole range of medicines not traditionally thought of as such.

One waste contractor’s list of what they believe should be treated as ‘cytotoxic’ or ‘cytostatic’ and disposed of in a purple-lidded bin is here. You will note that it contains a range of medicines commonly used in general practice:

<http://www.srcl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/List-of-Hazardous-Medicines.pdf>

This video from one supplier of sharps bins explains very concisely what goes into which clinical waste bin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVI4vtFBbew&feature=youtu.be>

Recently asked questions

- 1. “Should we dispose of sharps and vials used to administer live vaccines in a purple-lidded sharps bin for cytotoxic and cytostatic waste?”**

Our advice is that the only *vaccine* sharps that need to go into a purple-lidded bin are anything used to administer BCG vaccine. This is in line with advice from Public Health England.

- 2. “We put all live vaccine sharps and vials (not just BCG) into a purple-lidded bin. Is this wrong?”**

It is not uncommon for NHS organisations to advise that all used sharps from the administration of live vaccines should be treated as ‘cytotoxic’ or ‘cytostatic’ so while this practice appears to be unnecessary it is not ‘wrong’. You might choose to confirm the advice of the company that collects your clinical waste, or put sharps used for live vaccine other than BCG into a yellow-lidded bin in future.

Further reading

Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167976/HTM_07-01_Final.pdf