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Needle Clean-up Kits Now Available from Whatcom County Health Department

BELLINGHAM, WA — Businesses and community groups who wish to clean up and safely dispose of needles found on private or public property can now do so with free needle clean-up kits provided by the Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD). The kits contain safety equipment and instructions about how to safely handle needles and can be picked up from WCHD at 1500 N. Street during normal business hours.

Each kit contains a sharps disposal container, puncture-resistant gloves, safety glasses, tongs and simple instructions for safe collection. Full sharps containers can be returned for free to WCHD for appropriate disposal.

A video demonstration that explains how to use the kits is available on the [WCHD Facebook page](#).

The pilot program was developed in response to requests from local businesses and community organizations for information and assistance in picking up discarded needles found in the community. The program is funded using Whatcom County's solid waste management funds as part of WCHD's response to growing public health concerns over opioid misuse.

Used needles that are left behind are both a nuisance and a safety concern. Used needles can spread diseases like Hepatitis C through accidental needle pokes. The risk of contracting a disease from a needle-stick injury is very low. However, to avoid exposure, anyone who handles discarded needles should use the proper equipment and procedures.

The needle clean-up program is intended for local organizations and business owners cleaning up used needles found in the community, not for businesses that generate used needles. Individuals injecting insulin or other prescribed medication should dispose of their used needles in sharps containers provided by local pharmacies or clinics, or when not available, using the instructions for safe packaging on the [WCHD website](#).

For pictures of the needle clean-up kits and more information about them, visit <http://whatcomcounty.us/2802/Needle-Clean-up-Kits>.

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