

Clinical Waste versus General Waste

Clinical waste

As defined in the RACGP *Infection Control Standards for Office Based Practices* (4th Edition), clinical waste is that which has the potential to cause sharps injury, infection or public offence. It includes:

- discarded sharps
- human tissue (excludes teeth, hair, nails, urine and faeces)
- materials which contain free flowing or expressible blood
- related waste which includes:
 - cytotoxic waste (unused portion of cytotoxic drugs)
 - pharmaceutical waste
 - chemical waste (e.g. formalin, alcohol based formulations)
 - radioactive waste

General waste

- office waste
- kitchen waste
- urine, faeces, teeth, hair, nails
- sanitary napkins, tampons
- disposable nappies
- used tongue depressors
- disposable vaginal speculae, cervical cytology spatulas and plastic cytology brushes
- non hazardous pharmaceutical waste
- items contaminated with blood or body substances (not to an extent to be considered clinical waste, i.e. not contaminated with expressible blood)

Reference: RACGP *Infection Control Standards for Office Based Practices* (4th Edition)