

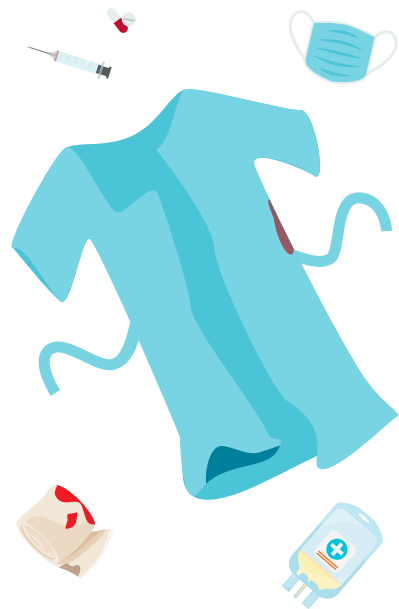
# Where Does Medical Waste Go?

*Click each step of the waste cycle to learn more.*

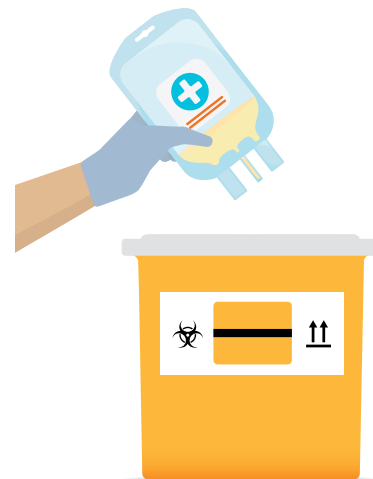
The medical waste management cycle starts when medical waste is generated during the delivery of care and continues through segregation, collection, transport, treatment, and disposal. To ensure medical waste is managed compliantly, responsibly, and safely, it is important to understand the steps required from generation to disposal.



Generating  
Waste



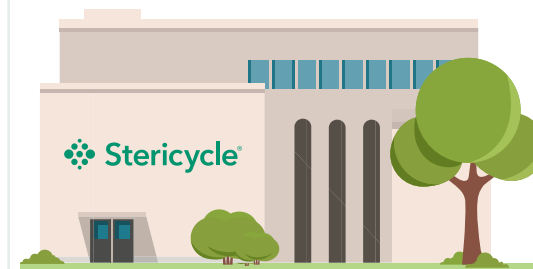
Segregating  
Waste



Preparing Waste  
Containers for Transport



Treating  
Waste



Sending Treated Waste  
to its Final Destination



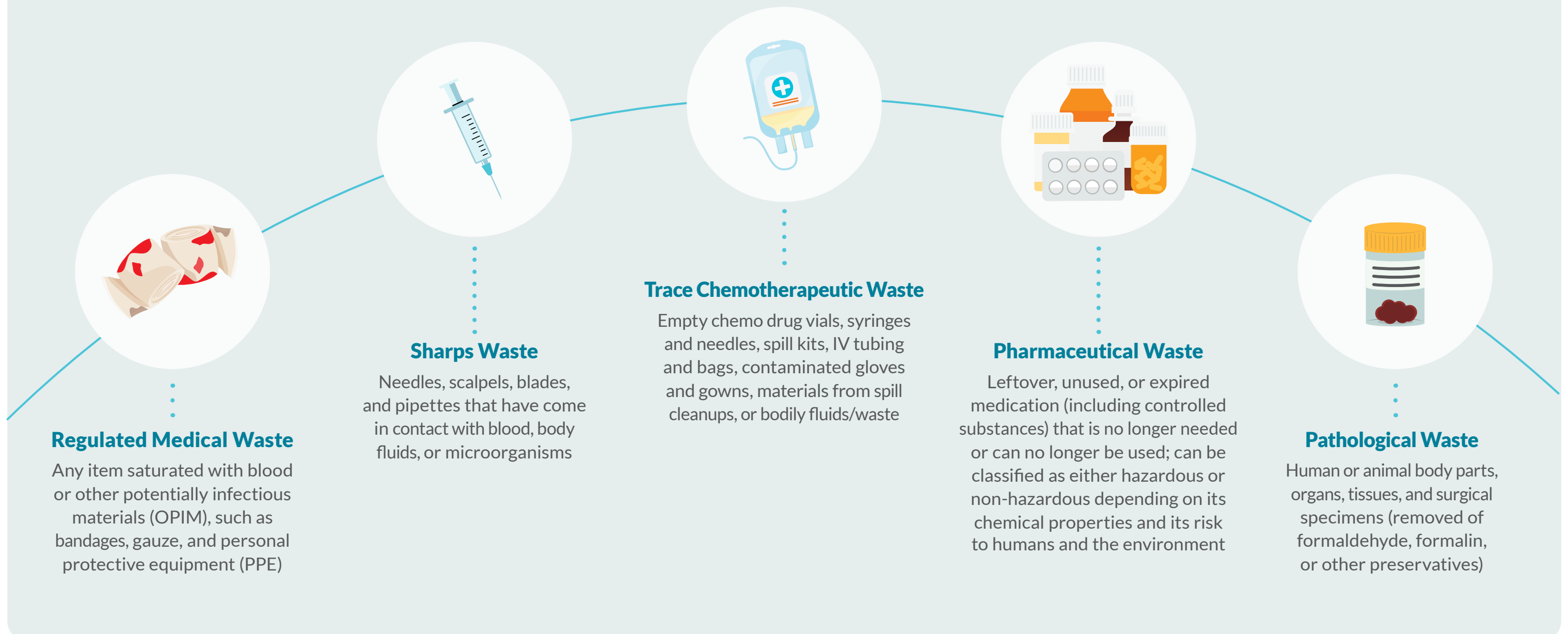
At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](https://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.



## Generating Waste

The delivery of healthcare generates a variety of different types of waste.

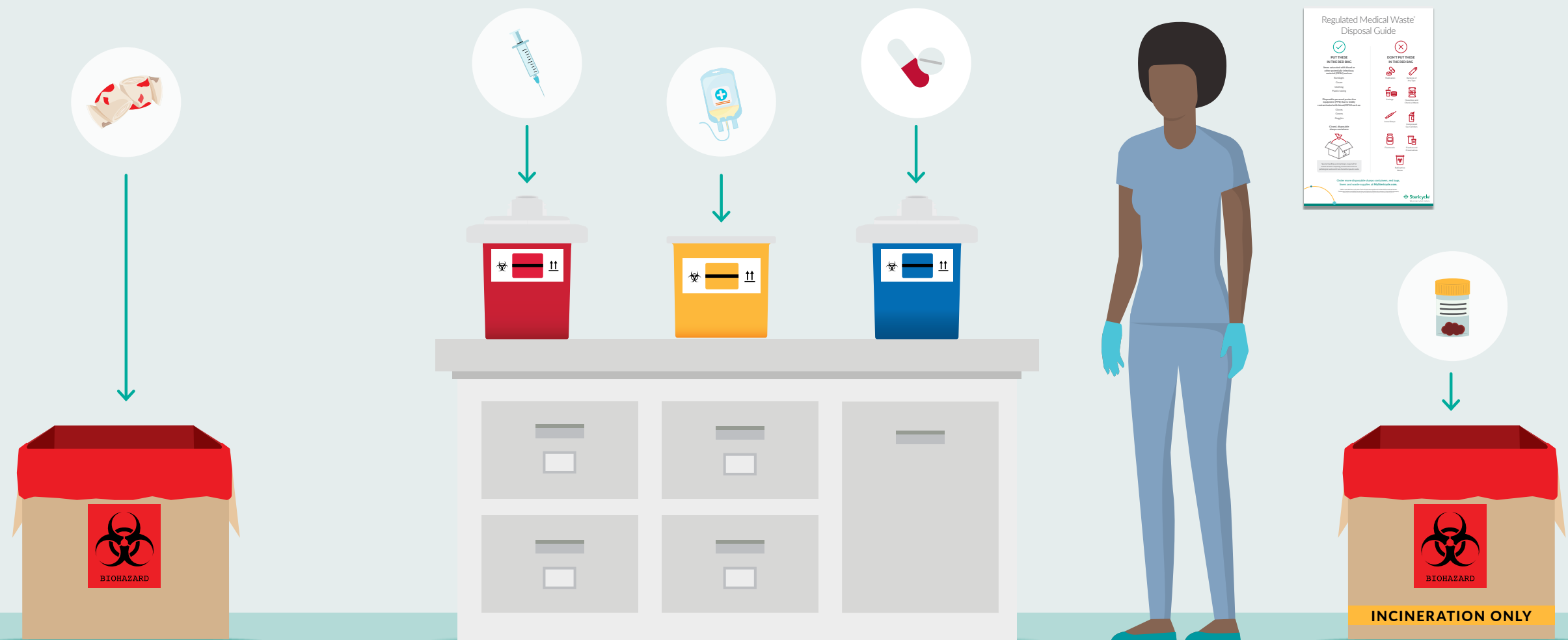


At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](https://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.

## Segregating Waste

Healthcare workers must segregate medical waste into the appropriate containers to ensure safe, compliant collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal under federal, state, and local regulations. There are different containers designed specifically for certain types of waste. For example, syringes should be collected in a sharps container, not in the regular trash.



Waste segregation has been simplified for illustration purposes. Segregation practices may vary depending on the type of waste, state regulations, and facility policy.

At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.

## Preparing Waste Containers for Transport

How an organization prepares waste for transport depends on the type of waste being disposed of. For instance, organizations that generate [regulated medical waste](#) (RMW) can either use corrugated boxes or specially designed reusable containers, whereas [sharps](#) should be disposed of in a closed, puncture-resistant container, and [pharmaceutical waste](#) should be placed in its own designated, color-coded receptacle. [Trace chemotherapy waste](#) and pathological waste, although forms of RMW, should be further segregated as well and marked for incineration. In preparation for transport, generators of medical waste should be aware of and follow the appropriate guidelines.



### Container Preparation

Once the waste container is full, staff should prepare the waste for pickup by a medical waste management company. In some instances, outer packaging is required for transport.



### Packaging and Labeling

For waste that is transported by a vehicle, follow Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations for packaging and labeling. Your waste hauler is also responsible for transporting the waste to a treatment facility in accordance with DOT requirements.



### Recordkeeping

If the waste is being picked up by a waste hauler, the organization will provide tracking information and detailed records, such as a shipping paper or a manifest.



### Shipping

If you are mailing the waste to a waste management facility, follow the requirements set by the carrier.

At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.

# Treating Waste

After arriving at the permitted medical waste management facility, the medical waste will be treated according to applicable requirements to render it non-infectious. Stericycle uses two waste treatment methods:

Autoclaving

- Most common medical waste treatment method in the U.S.
- Uses high-pressure, high-temperature steam to render the waste non-infectious
- Autoclaved waste is then sent to landfill for final disposal

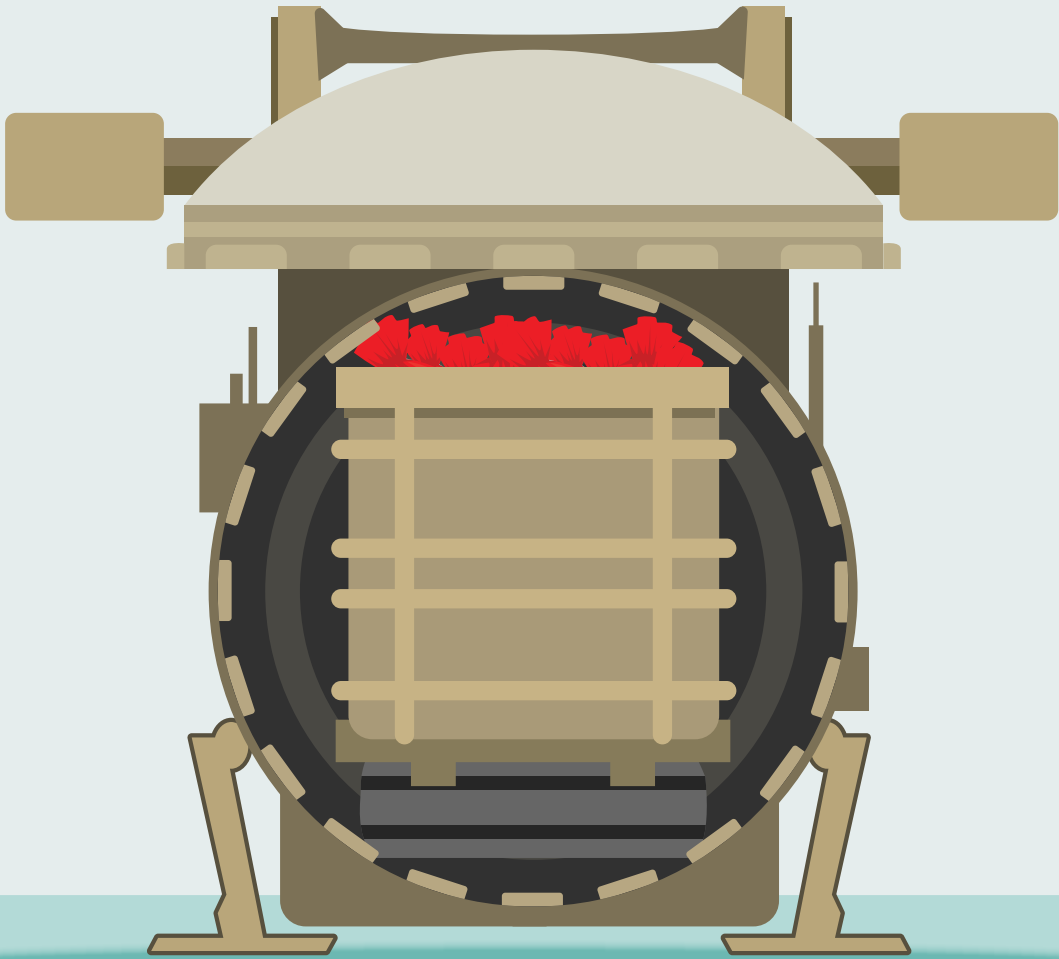
Waste treated by autoclaving include:



RMW



Sharps



Incineration

- Performed at a hospital, medical, and infectious waste incinerator
- Used when incineration is warranted or designated under state agency requirements
- Employs high temperatures that promote combustion or burning

Waste treated by incineration include:



Pathological Waste



Non-Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Non-RCRA) Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals



Trace Chemotherapeutic Waste

At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.

## Sending Treated Waste to its Final Destination

Depending on local regulations, after the medical waste has been rendered non-infectious, the waste management company sends the waste to a landfill or waste-to-energy facility.



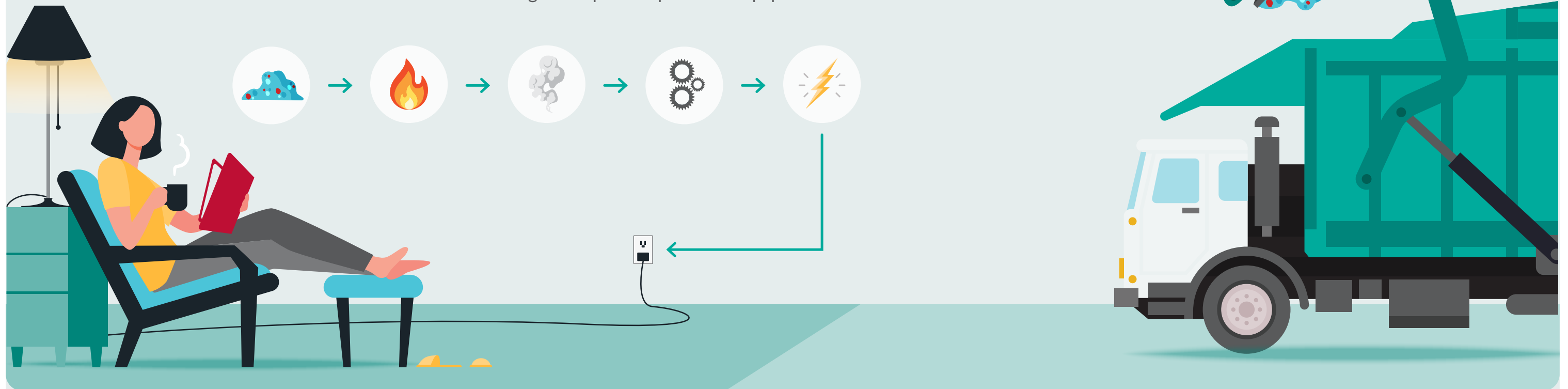
### Waste-to-Energy Facility

- The treated waste is converted to electricity using specially designed boilers that combust non-hazardous waste in a closed-loop system. The technology captures the heat generated by the combustion and uses it to create steam, which powers an electricity-producing turbine.
- The electricity is sent to local utility companies for use in homes and businesses—or it can be funneled back to the medical waste management plant to power its equipment.



### Landfill

Treated waste is picked up from the treatment facility and brought to a landfill for final disposal.



At Stericycle, we help healthcare organizations protect health and well-being by setting up compliant medical waste management programs that minimize environmental impact.

Visit [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com) for more information about how Stericycle can be your total medical waste management partner.