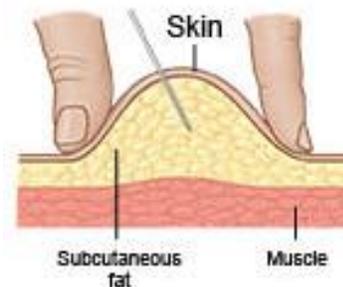
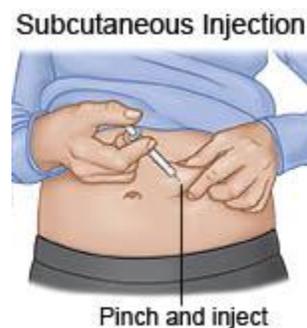


How to Self-Administer a Subcutaneous Injection

There are three components of a syringe: the needle, barrel, and plunger. The needle is the portion of the syringe that penetrates your skin. The barrel holds the medicine and has markings on it like a ruler (the markings are in milliliters [ml]). The plunger is used to draw medicine into the barrel, but also to inject medicine into the body. Note: **Insulin syringes:** This holds a maximum of 1 ml of medicine. The syringe has markings from 10 to 100 Units. The marking at 100 Units is the same as 1 ml. The marking at 50 Units is the same as 0.5 ml and the marking at 25 Units is the same as 0.25 ml.

What common locations on my body are best for an intramuscular injection?

Abdomen: Uncover your abdomen. You may give an injection within the following area: below the waist to just above the hip bone and from the side to about 2 inches from the belly button. Avoid the belly button.



Thigh: Uncover the entire leg. Find the area halfway between the knee and hip and slightly to the side. Gently grasp the area to make sure you can pinch 1 to 2 inches of skin.

Lower back: Uncover the back from the waist to the top of the buttocks. Imagine a line that runs across the back just above the crack between the buttocks. An injection may be given below the waist and above this line. Give the injection halfway between the spine and the side.

Upper Arm: Uncover the arm to the shoulder. Have the person getting the injection stand with his hand on his hip. Stand next to and a little behind the person. Find the area halfway between the elbow and shoulder. Gently grasp the skin at the back of the arm between your thumb and first 2 fingers. You should be able to grasp 1 to 2 inches of skin.

What are the risks of a subcutaneous injection?

You may get an infection, have the needle break in your skin, or hit a nerve. You may have scarring, lumps, or dimpling of the skin from a subcutaneous injection.

When should I contact a healthcare provider?

- A fever, sneezing, or coughing develops after the injection is given.
- There is a lump, swelling, or bruising where the injection was given that does not go away.
- You have questions about how to give an injection.

When should I seek immediate care or call 911?

- A rash or itching develops after the injection is given.
- Shortness of breath develops after the injection is given.
- The mouth, lips, or face swells after the injection is given.

How do I give a subcutaneous injection?

Wash your hands with soap and dry them completely. Put on gloves if necessary.

- **Open the alcohol wipe:** Swab the area where you plan to administer the injection. Let the area dry. Do not touch this area again until you are ready to administer the injection.
- **Prepare the syringe:** Hold the syringe with your writing hand and pull the needle cover off with your other hand. Place the syringe between your thumb and first finger. Let the barrel of the syringe rest on your second finger. Insert the needle into the rubber stopper of the medication. Pull back on the plunger to draw the medicine back into the barrel of the syringe.
- **Hold the skin around where you will give the injection:** With your free hand, gently press on and pull the skin so that it is slightly tight.
- **Insert the needle into the skin:** Hold the syringe barrel tightly and use your wrist to inject the needle through the skin and into the subcutaneous fat at a 90-degree angle.
- **Inject the medicine:** Gently push down on the plunger to inject the medicine. **DO NOT** push forcefully as this can produce pain.
- **Remove the needle:** Once the barrel is empty, remove the needle at the same angle as it went in. Place gauze over the area where you gave the injection and apply pressure. If there is no bleeding, or when bleeding stops, remove the gauze. If desired, a band aid can be applied to cover the injection site.

How do I get rid of used syringes and needles?

It is important to dispose of the needles and syringes correctly. Do not throw needles into the trash. You may receive a hard-plastic container made especially for used syringes and needles. You can also use a soda bottle or other plastic bottle with a screw lid. Make sure that both the syringe and needle fit into the container easily and cannot break through the sides. Ask your healthcare provider or a pharmacist what your state or local requirements are for getting rid of used syringes and needles.