



# **How to Give Yourself a Subcutaneous Injection**

Using Pre-filled Syringes



## What to Have Ready

- Pre-filled medication syringe
- Alcohol swab and cotton ball
- Sharps container (hard plastic re-sealable biohazard container) from the pharmacy to dispose of used needle and syringe



## Prepare for your injection

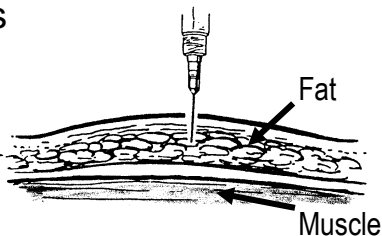
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Gather all the items you need and take them to a clean table or flat surface.
- Cover area with a paper towel.
- Check:
  - the medication name and expiry date on the syringe.
  - the amount (dose and volume) of medication you are to take.



## Choose the injection site

A subcutaneous injection puts the medication into the fat tissue below the skin.

The medication absorbs more slowly this way.

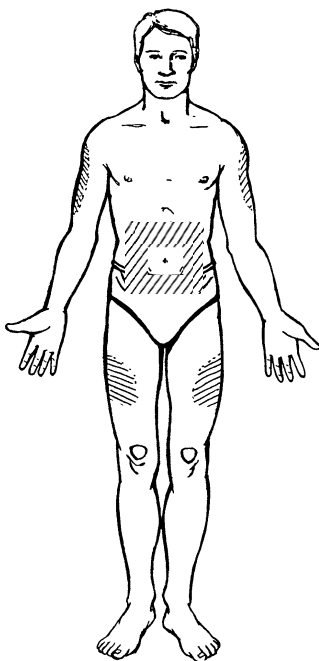


You can inject into the:

- abdomen (except for one inch around the navel)
- upper outer area of thighs

A family member or caregiver can also inject into:

- the upper outer area of your arms



**\*Change where you give the injection each time.**

The new injection site should be at least 1 to 2 inches away from the last injection site.

## Clean the injection site

1. Clean the injection site.
  - a) Wash the area with soap and water, **or**
  - b) Clean with an alcohol swab.
2. Allow the skin to dry.
3. Get ready for when you take the needle out.
  - a) Put a clean cotton ball on the paper towel, **or**
  - b) Put the used alcohol swab on the paper towel.



Cleaning with  
an alcohol swab

## Inject the medication

1. Pick up the syringe.
2. Hold the syringe like you would hold a pencil.
3. Pinch the skin and fat tissue on the sides of the site with your other hand.

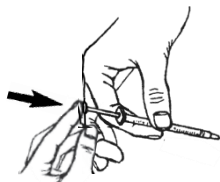


4. Hold the syringe about 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the injection site at a right angle (90-degree angle) to the skin.



If you are very lean (don't have much fat tissue), hold syringe at a 45-degree angle to the skin.

5. Quickly stab the needle through the skin into the fat tissue.
6. While holding the syringe in place, push the plunger down slowly with your other hand to inject the medication.



7. While continuing to hold the syringe in place, take the cotton ball or alcohol swab with your other hand and put it on your skin near the needle.



8. Quickly pull the needle out. Cover the injection site with the cotton ball or alcohol swab.

9. Press gently on the site. The site might bleed a little bit. This usually means you have broken a small blood vessel under the skin. You might get a bruise. Don't worry if this happens. It is harmless.



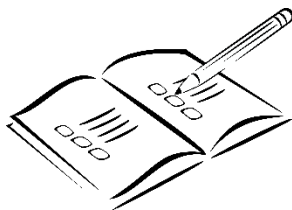
## Clean Up

- Place used syringes in the sharps container from the pharmacy.
- Check with your pharmacist on how to dispose of the container when it is full.



## Write it down

- After each injection, write in your self-injection record:
  - the date
  - where you give the injection
  - the name of the medication and how much you took (the dose)



Adapted with permission from FA.200.Se48 How to Give Yourself a Subcutaneous Injection (2016) by Vancouver Coastal Health.  
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