

Subcutaneous Injection Instructions & Needle Disposal

Pre / Post Care Guide

Administration

Subcutaneous shots can be given straight in at a 90-degree angle, or at a 45-degree angle. You can give the shot at a 90-degree angle if 2 inches of skin can be grasped between your thumb and first (index) finger. If only 1 inch of skin can be grasped, give the shot at a 45-degree angle.

Where can I give a subcutaneous shot?

There are many sites on the body that are safe to give subcutaneous shots.

Upper Arm: Uncover the arm to the shoulder to see the whole arm. Have the person getting the shot stand with hand on hip. Stand next to and a little behind the person. Find the area in the middle part of the arm, 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 have 1-2 inches of skin.

Abdomen: Uncover the abdomen to see the whole area. Find the waist area. You may give a shot bounded by these landmarks: below the waist, to just above the hip bone, and from where the body curves at the side to about 2 inches from the middle of the abdomen. Use the natural line in the middle of the body as a marker. It may be hard to see, but it is there unless it was covered by surgery. Avoid the surrounding area 2 inches from the bellybutton.

Thigh: Uncover the entire leg. Find the area between the knee and hip. The middle of the thigh, from mid-front to mid-side, on the outside part of the thigh is a safe site. Gently grasp the area to make sure you can pinch 1-2 inches of skin.

What items do I need to give a shot?

- One alcohol wipe
- Vial containing the injectable medication
- The correct size needle and syringe (included in your package)

How do I inject medication into subcutaneous tissue?

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and dry them completely.
- Open the foil containing the alcohol wipe.
- Using the alcohol wipe, wipe the area where you plan to give the shot. Let the area dry.
- Take the cover off the needle by holding the syringe with your writing hand and pulling on the cover with your other hand. It is like taking a cap off a pen.
- If you will give the shot at a 45-degree angle, hold the syringe in your writing hand. Place the syringe between your thumb and your index and second fingers. The needle should be pointing upwards or downwards at the 45-degree angle you plan to use.

- If you will give the shot at a 90-degree angle, hold the syringe with your writing hand. Hold the syringe under your thumb and first finger. Let the barrel of the syringe rest on your second finger. (Many people hold a pen this way when they write.)
- Grasp the skin with the hand not holding the syringe. Holding the syringe barrel tightly with your writing hand, use your wrist to insert the needle through the skin. Sometimes the needle goes in easily. Some people have tougher skin and a little more pressure or quickness is required.
- Once the needle is all the way in, push the plunger down slowly to inject the syringe's contents.
- Remove the needle at the same angle it went in.
- Dispose of the syringe and needle in a sharps container.

How do I dispose of used syringes and needles?

You can purchase a Sharps Container, a hard-plastic container made for used syringes and needles, at your local pharmacy. If you did not purchase this container with your medication, you can use a hard-plastic container with a screw-on top such as a clothing softener or hard plastic detergent bottle. Be sure you can put both the syringe and the needle into the container easily. Whatever container you choose, be sure needles cannot break through the sides, bottom or top. Once full, cap it and dispose in the garbage.

Questions? Call us at 801-335-5243 — we are glad to walk you through your first injection in person or by telehealth.