

## Intramuscular (IM) Self Injection

### What is an IM injection?

An IM injection puts medicine deep into the muscle. This helps the medicine to be quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.

IM shots are given at a 90 degree angle. The needle for IM injections can be 22-23 gauge and 1-1.5 inches in length.



### Step 1: Setting up for the Injection

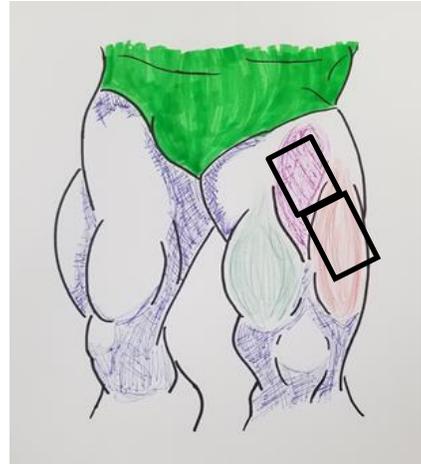
1. Find a comfortable, well lit place. Clean this area.
2. Gather supplies:
  - a. Medicine in a vial.
    - i. Remove medicine from the refrigerator and let it reach room temperature.
    - ii. Make sure it is the medicine your doctor prescribed.
    - iii. Check the expiration date on the vial. Make sure you are not past the expiration date.
    - iv. Make sure the medicine is clear, not discolored.
  - b. Disposable syringe and needles.
  - c. Alcohol swabs.
  - d. Puncture proof disposal container.
3. Wash your hands. Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent infection.

## Step 2: Selecting the Injection Site

Thigh muscle:

- The thigh is a good place to give yourself an injection because it is easy to see.

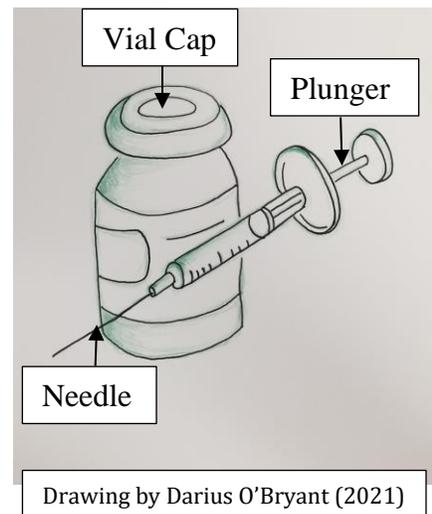
The picture on the right shows the position for self-injection inside the black boxes on the thigh.



Drawing by Darius O'Bryant (2021)

## Step 3: Preparing the Injection Dose

1. Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab. Allow to dry.
2. Check the syringe package. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use that syringe.
3. Pull the cover straight off the syringe. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose that your doctor prescribed. Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.
4. Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper.
  - Do not put the needle through the rubber stopper more than once.
5. Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial.
6. Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down. Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle.
7. Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medicine to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your doctor ordered.



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8. Keeping the needle in the vial, check for air bubbles in the syringe. If there are air bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Then slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe without removing the needle from the bottle.
9. After air bubbles are gone, pull the plunger back to the number (ml or cc) marking on the syringe that matches your dose.
10. Check to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is **VERY** important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your doctor.
11. Remove the syringe from the vial but do not lay it down.

#### **Step 4: Give the Injection**

1. Clean the injection site skin with an alcohol swab; let it air dry.
2. Hold the skin around the injection site in the manner described above.
3. Insert the IM needle into the muscle at a 90 degree angle with one quick and firm motion.
4. After you inserting the needle into the muscle take your hand off the skin.
5. Gently pull back on the plunger of the syringe to check for blood.
  - If you see blood in the needle, do not inject the medicine and remove the needle immediately.
  - If you do not see any blood in the needle, you can complete the injection by pushing the medicine slowly into the muscle. You may feel some burning or pressure as the medicine enters your muscle.
6. When you finish injecting the full dose of the medicine into the muscle, remove the needle.
7. Gently press an alcohol swab on the injection site. Hold pressure on site until there is no bleeding. You can place a band aid on injection site if needed.

#### **Instructions for Disposing of Needles**

Place the used needles in a puncture proof disposal container. Incorrect disposal of needles and other sharp objects can be a health risk and hurt the environment. Most counties in Michigan have a safe needle disposal program through county solid waste divisions in each county.

For information on how to store and dispose of used needles visit:

<http://www.safeneedledisposal.org/>

To find out if your county has a program access:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/whm-stsw-sharps-collection-list\\_196524\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/whm-stsw-sharps-collection-list_196524_7.pdf).