

Medical Oncology

Subcutaneous Injection Information Sheet

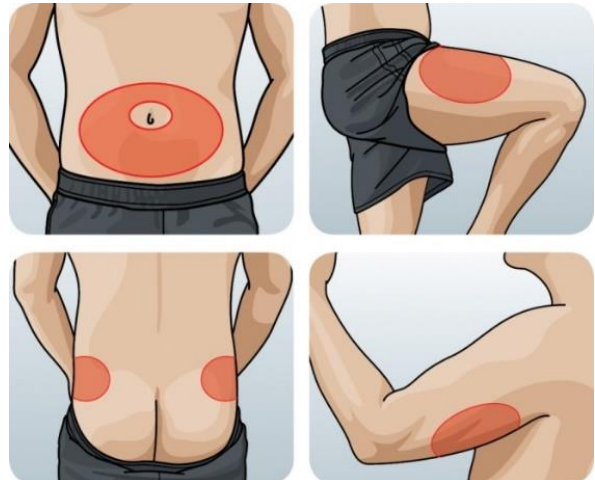
What is a subcutaneous injection?

This is an injection given in the fatty layer of tissue under the skin.

Before giving the injection:

- Wash your hands. Wash your hands with soap and warm water to prevent infections.
- Gather the supplies:
 - Medicine and disposable needle and syringe
 - Alcohol pads
 - Hard plastic or metal container with a tightly securing lid in which to discard the used needles and syringe (you may buy a red, plastic “sharp’s container”)
 - Band-Aids

- Clean and inspect the injection site. Before injecting medicine, inspect the skin. Make sure there are no bruises, burns, swelling, hardness, or irritation in the area. Rotate injection sites to prevent damage to an area due to repeated injections. Clean the skin with an alcohol swab. Let the alcohol dry before doing the injection. Be sure to avoid the 2 inches surrounding the belly button.



- Use a new needle and syringe with every injection.

- Prepare the syringe with medicine. Before drawing medicine from a vial, make sure you are:
 - using the correct medicine
 - giving the correct dose
 - at the correct time

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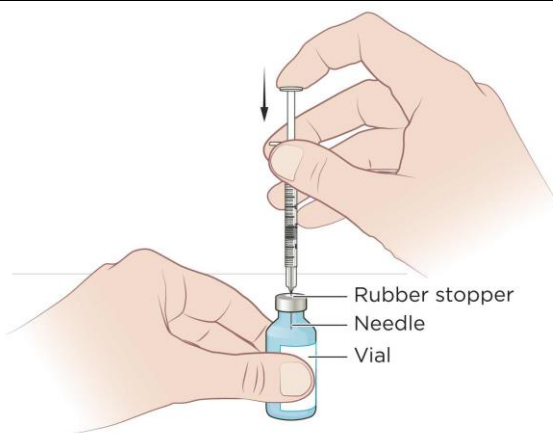
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PREPARING A SYRINGE:

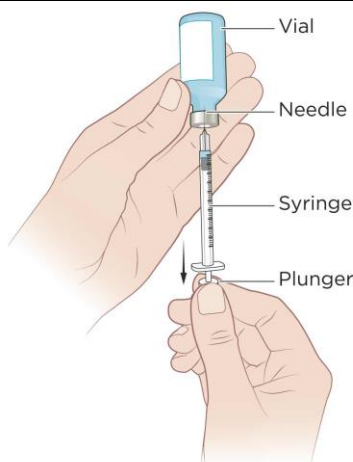
Remove the plastic cap from the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with an alcohol swab.

Draw air into the syringe. Draw back the plunger to fill the syringe with air up to the volume that you will be injecting. This makes it easier to draw the medicine into the syringe. Do not worry. If you forget this step, you can still get the medicine out of the vial.

Insert air into the vial. Remove the cap from the needle and push the needle through the rubber stopper at the top of the vial. Inject all the air into the vial. Be careful not to touch the needle to keep it clean.



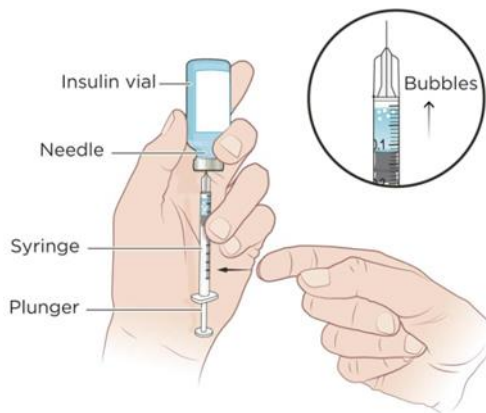
Withdraw the medicine. Turn the vial and syringe upside down so the needle points upward. **Be sure to keep the needle BELOW the fluid level.** Then pull back on the plunger to withdraw the correct amount of medicine.



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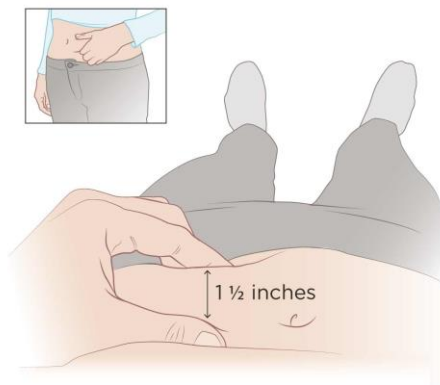
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Remove any air bubbles. Tap the syringe to push any bubbles to the top and gently depress the plunger to push the air bubbles out. A few very tiny bubbles may remain, this is okay.

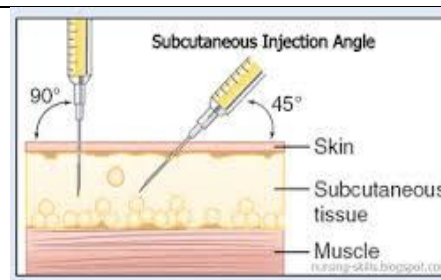
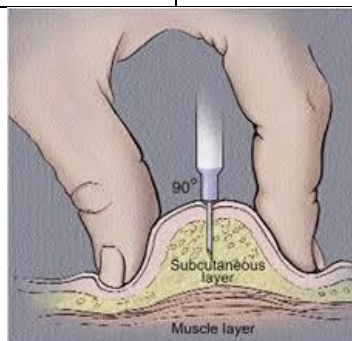


- Inject the medicine.

Pinch your skin. Take a big pinch of skin between your thumb and index finger and hold it. (Your thumb and forefinger should be about an inch and a half apart.) This pulls the fatty tissue away from the muscle and makes the injection easier.



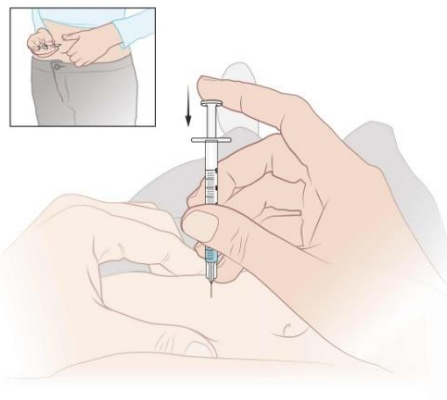
Insert the needle. Insert the needle into the pinched skin at a 90-degree angle. You should do this quickly, but without great force. If you have very little fat on your body (less than 1”), you may need to insert the needle at a 45-degree angle to the skin. Do not press down on top of plunger while poking the skin.



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Inject the medicine. Slowly push the plunger to inject the medicine. You should inject the entire amount of medicine.



- Withdraw the needle: Let go of the pinched skin and withdraw the needle. Discard the used needle in your sharp's container. When container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, tape the lid down tightly with duct or packing tape. Label the container with "MEDICAL WASTE-SHARPS – DO NOT RECYCLE" then place in trash receptacle.
- Apply pressure to the site. Use gauze to apply light pressure to the injection site. Do not rub the injection site as this may increase bruising. If there is any bleeding, it should be minor. You may notice a little bruising later. This is common and nothing to be concerned about.

Complications of Subcutaneous Injection

If you will be doing this type of injection for more than one dose or for multiple days, you will need to rotate the injection sites. This means that you should not inject medicine into the same spot twice in a row. For example, if you injected medicine into your left thigh this morning, use your right thigh this afternoon. Using the same injection site over and over again can cause discomfort and even tissue damage.

Infection at the site of injection is a risk. Signs of infection at the injection site include:

- severe pain
- redness
- swelling
- warmth
- drainage

A fever (temperature 100.4 degrees F or greater) might also be a sign of infection. These symptoms should be reported to your doctor right away.

If you have questions or concerns, please call your care team at:

Bronson Cancer Center – Battle Creek 269-245-8660
Bronson Cancer Center – Kalamazoo 269-286-7170