

# PATIENT EDUCATION

## Administering Medication via Subcutaneous Injection

**Properly administering your medication at home is important to your safety. In the event of an emergency, always call 911.**

A subcutaneous (SQ) injection is a shot that delivers the medicine into the fatty layer of tissue that is just under the skin.

### **SUPPLIES:**

- Prefilled medication syringe
- Needle (25 gauge)
- Sterile 2x2 gauze pad
- Alcohol/Antiseptic wipes
- Sharps container

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Gather supplies. Clean work area. Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.
2. Check labels for name, drug, frequency, and expiration. Inspect the medication syringe for any cracks, leaks, particulate matter, and clarity of medication. Contact us for any discrepancies or concerns.
3. Prepare your prefilled syringes for flushing your IV catheter as instructed by your nurse.
4. Assemble the syringe and needle as instructed by your nurse. If your medication syringe comes prefilled, the needle may already be attached to the syringe and ready for use. If the needle is not attached, attach it now as directed by your nurse.
5. Select a new site on your thigh, abdomen, or back of the upper arm.

**NOTE:** It is **extremely** important to rotate the sites of your subcutaneous injections to keep your skin and tissue healthy. Each site should be at least 1 inch away from the prior location. Repeating injections in the same place can cause scarring and hardening of tissue that will interfere with the absorption of your medication.

6. Beginning at the center of the chosen site, disinfect the skin with an alcohol wipe, 3 inches in diameter.

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7. Carefully remove the protective cap covering the needle on the syringe, maintaining asepsis.

**NOTE: The exposed needle is sterile. Use caution to not touch the needle or allow it to touch a surface which is not sterile.**

8. Gently pinch the skin surrounding the site you disinfected.
9. Using a swift darting motion, insert the needle at a 45-90 degree angle into the skin fold. (This ensures that the tip of the needle is in the subcutaneous tissue)
10. Pull back slightly on the plunger of the syringe, checking for any blood visible in the syringe.

**NOTE:** If blood is visible, pull the syringe and needle back slightly and recheck by gently pulling back on the plunger again. No visible blood indicates that the needle is not in a blood vessel, and you may proceed with injection.

**If blood is still visible after you have pulled the syringe and needle back, you should remove the needle completely and start over. Repeat step 4 by preparing a new syringe and a new site.**

11. Inject the medication by pushing on the plunger.
12. When the syringe is empty, remove the needle from the subcutaneous site.
13. Cover the injection spot with a gauze pad. Apply light pressure, but **do not rub** the injection site.
14. Discard the syringe and needle into the sharps container and discard used supplies in appropriate receptacles.
15. Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.



The information included in this document is intended for informational and educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace medical advice offered by a physician or other qualified health provider. If you think you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 immediately.

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