

# Family Education Sheet

## How to Give a Subcutaneous Injection



Boston Children's Hospital

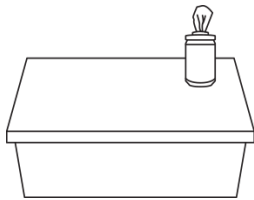
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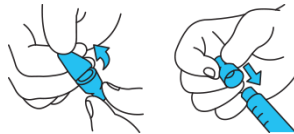
This family education sheet gives you information on how to give a subcutaneous injection. A subcutaneous injection is a way of giving medication. You give the injection in the fatty tissue between the skin and the muscle.

If you're using a numbing cream (like EMLA), apply it 1 hour before you give the injection, or as directed.

### How do I give a subcutaneous injection?



1. Gather supplies.
2. Find a flat area to use as a work surface. Use a clean and dry surface. Wash your hands.

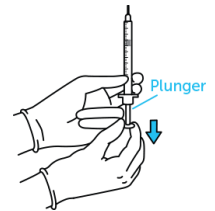


3. Open the needle by removing the plastic cap or peeling back the paper. Attach the needle to the syringe **without touching the needle**.

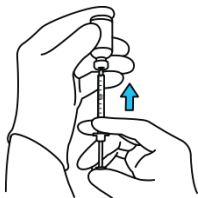
**Note:** If you have pre-filled syringes, you can skip steps 4–7 and go to step 8.



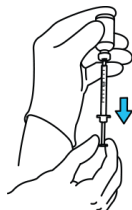
4. Open the medicine vial and wipe the top with an alcohol wipe.



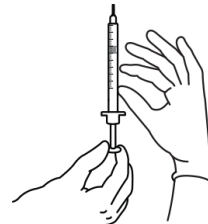
5. Pull the plunger on the syringe back to the prescribed amount.



6. Push the needle through the top of the vial and turn the vial upside down. Push the plunger to inject the air from the syringe into the vial.



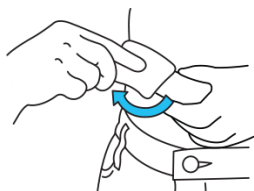
7. Pull the plunger back to fill the syringe with the medicine to the amount prescribed.



8. Tap the syringe with your finger (with the needle pointing up) if you see air bubbles. This should make them float to the top. Gently push the plunger to let the air bubbles out.



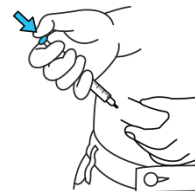
9. Put the cap back on the needle **without touching the needle**.



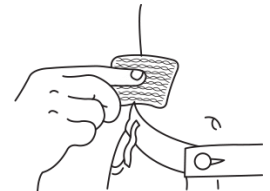
10. Choose the place to give the injection. **Don't** use the same area each time.



12. Take the cap off the needle and hold the needle at a 45°–90° angle (the way you hold a pen) at the site. Make sure the bevel (the hole in the tip of the needle) is facing up. Gently squeeze the skin with one hand and quickly insert the needle with the other hand.



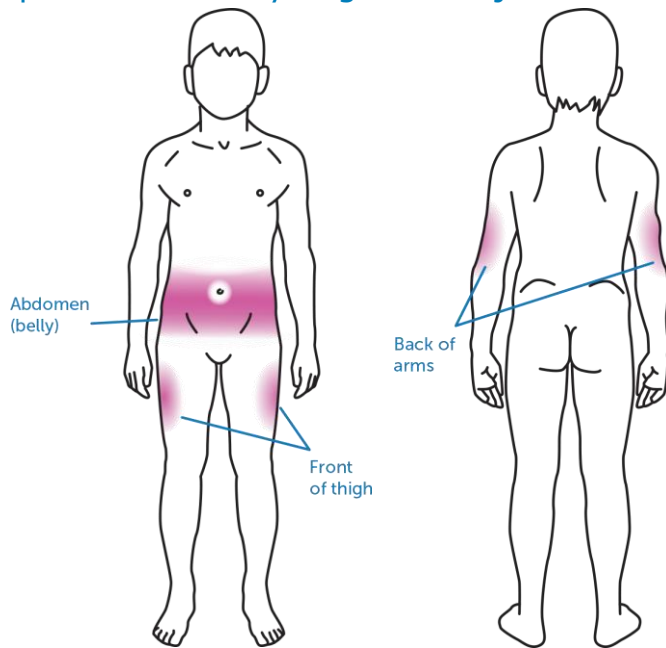
13. Inject the medicine by gently pressing on the plunger until it stops.



14. Remove the needle. Press the site gently with a gauze pad until any bleeding stops.

For suggestions on places to give the injection, see page 2.

## Injection sites – Remember to change spots each time you give an injection



## How do I safely dispose of needles?

The information below explains how to safely get rid of needles, syringes and lancets (also called **sharps**) in Massachusetts. Contact your state's Department of Public Health if you don't live in Massachusetts.

## What should I do with used needles, syringes or lancets?

- Put used needles and other sharps in a **special sharps container** right away after you use them.
- **Don't** put the cap back on a needle after you use it. Put it in the sharps container.
- **Don't** clip or bend needles.
- **Don't** put used sharps in the garbage or in recycling bins.
- **Don't** flush used sharps down the toilet or drop them in storm drains.

## Where can I get a sharps container?

- You can buy a sharps container at a medical supply store.
- You can contact a sharps mail-back service. You can safely return sharps containers by mail when they're full.
  - Medasend: (800) 200-3581
  - Stericycle: (800) 355-8773
  - Sharps Compliance, Inc.: (800) 772-5657
  - Waste by Mail: (800) 563-3854 or [wastebymail.com](http://wastebymail.com)

## What should I do when my sharps container is full?

- Bring it to a sharps collection center or use a mail-back service.
- Contact your local board of health for help finding a sharps collection center in your area. Collection centers may be in public health offices, police stations, fire stations, pharmacies or medical facilities.
- Sharps containers can't be thrown away with the trash. They can't be thrown out in recycling bins.

## For more information

Visit your state's website:

- [Ma.gov](http://Ma.gov)
- [Nh.gov](http://Nh.gov)
- [Maine.gov](http://Maine.gov)
- [Ri.gov](http://Ri.gov)