



(510) 679-3300  
27206 Calaroga Ave - Ste 201  
Hayward, CA 94545  
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## Subcutaneous Injection Instructions

### What items do I need to give a Subcutaneous (SQ) Injection?

- The correct size needle and syringe
- Medication vials
- Alcohol wipes
- Optional: Gloves for the individual administering the injection

### Precautions:

- It is important to follow these instructions so you do not give the injection directly into nerves, blood vessels, joints or bone.
- Rotate where you give injections. Scar tissue can accumulate and negatively affect the potency of the medication if you give an injection in the same place every day or even every week.

**Where can I administer an SQ injection?** There are many sites on the body that are safe to give subcutaneous injections.

### Areas where you can inject SQ:

#### A. Upper Arm

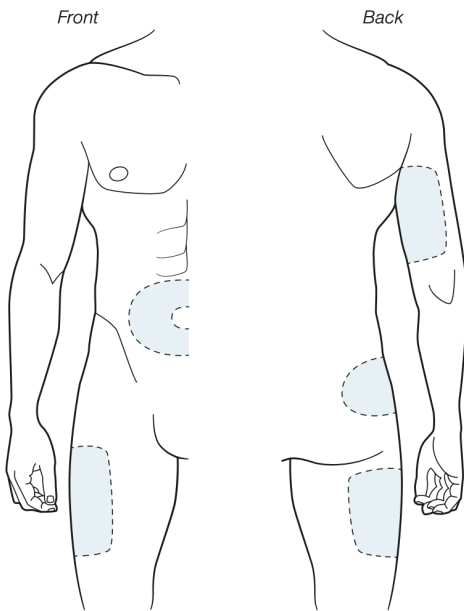
Uncover the arm to the shoulder to see the whole arm. Have the person receiving the shot stand with hand on hip. Stand next to and a little behind the person. Find the area in the middle part of the arm, halfway between the elbow and shoulder. Gently grasp the skin at the back of the arm between your thumb and first

#### B. 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 belly button.

#### C. 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.



*Sites on the body where subcutaneous injections can be given*



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## How do I transfer medication to the syringe?

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and dry them completely. Put on gloves if necessary.
2. Remove the plastic cap from the medication vial and use an alcohol wipe to clean the rubber stopper.
3. With an unused syringe, remove the needle cap and pull back on the plunger to bring an amount of air equal to the prescribed amount of medication.
4. Insert the needle into the vial and slowly push (inject) the air from the syringe into the vial. This action will displace the liquid in the vial when you withdraw the medication (Fig. 1).
5. Turn the vial and syringe upside down and carefully draw the liquid medication back into the syringe to the desired amount needed for one injection (Fig. 2).
6. If you see any air bubbles in the syringe, use your fingers to lightly tap or flick the syringe to draw the bubbles to the top of the syringe near the needle. This action will help expel any air in the syringe. **Note:** it is normal for a small amount of medication to come out of the needle as well (Fig. 3).
7. You are now ready to inject.

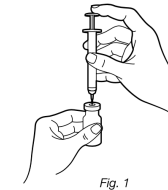


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

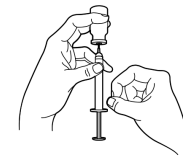


Fig. 3

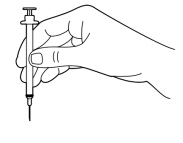


Fig. 4

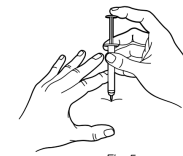


Fig. 5

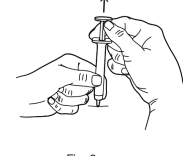
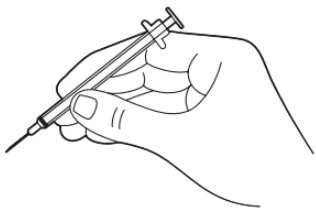
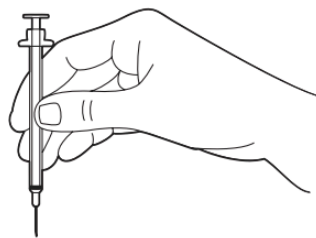


Fig. 6

## THE CORRECT ANGLES AND WAYS TO HOLD THE SYRINGE



45-degree angle



90-degree angle

A subcutaneous (SQ) injection is given in the fatty layer of tissue just under the skin. Syringes for subcutaneous injections will use smaller needles than those used for injections into a muscle. The typical Insulin or TB syringes will have  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or less needle length because it only needs to go slightly below the skin level. Only certain types of injections can be given through this route.

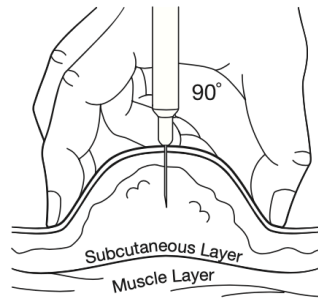
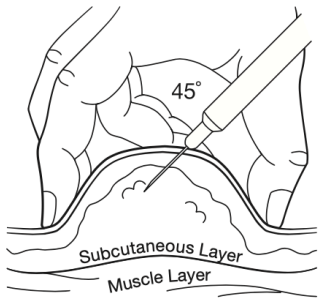
Subcutaneous shots can be given straight in at a 90-degree angle, or at a 45-degree angle. You can give the shot at a 90-degree angle if 2 inches of skin can be grasped between your thumb and first (index) finger. If only 1 inch of skin can be grasped, give the shot at a 45-degree angle.



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## How do I inject the medication into my body?

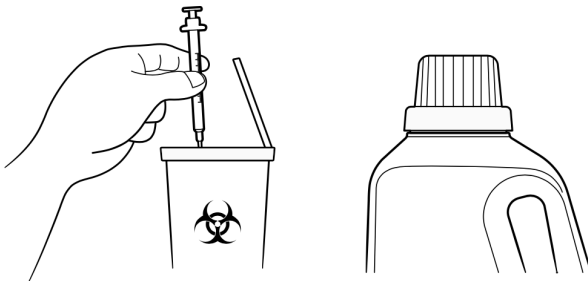
*Please read the section all the way through before giving the shot. It is important to get a general idea of what you are about to do before you begin. You may read this step-by-step procedure again as you do it.*



1. After completing all the prior steps, use an alcohol wipe to wipe the area where you plan to give the shot. Let the area dry.
2. If you give the shot at a 45-degree angle, hold the syringe with your writing hand. Place the syringe between your thumb and your index and second fingers. The bevel of the needle should be pointing upwards at the 45-degree angle you plan to use.
3. If you 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).

4. 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 will be required.
5. Once the needle is all the way in, push the plunger down slowly to inject the syringe's contents.
6. Remove the needle at the same angle you put it in.
7. Dispose of the syringe and needle in a Sharps Container.

## How can I dispose of used syringes and needles?



A sharps container is made of hard plastic and is needed to properly dispose of needles and syringes. You can request a sharps container from Balanced Medical Solutions free of charge, or use another plastic container, such as a laundry detergent bottle. You must make sure you can easily put both the syringe and needle into the container and that the needle cannot break through the sides, bottom or top of the container.



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You can bring your used sharps container back to Balanced Medical Solutions. For more information about how to properly dispose of sharps, you can visit [safeneedledisposal.org](http://safeneedledisposal.org).