



Giving Medicine as an Injection into Muscle

The medicine you are taking is to be given as an injection or shot into muscle, also called intramuscular or IM. Injecting medicine deep into the muscle allows it to be absorbed into the bloodstream quickly.

Getting ready

- Find a clean, well lit work space.
- Take out the bottle (vial) of medicine.
- Check the expiration date on the bottle. Do not use medicine that has expired.

Gather your supplies

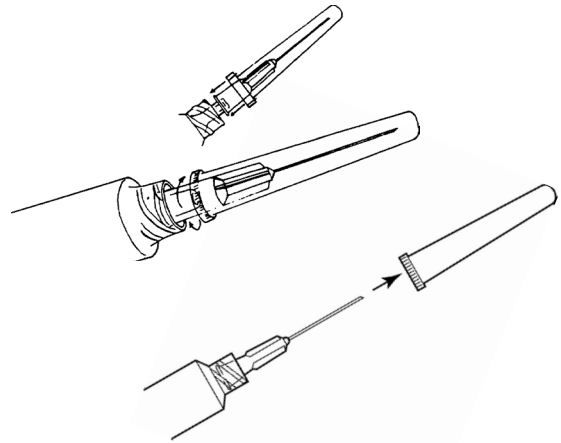
- Bottle of medicine
- Syringe and needle
- Alcohol pad
- Gauze pad
- Band-aid
- Sharps container or any heavy puncture-resistant plastic container with a lid

Drawing up the medicine into the syringe

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap. Dry your hands.
2. Check the label on the medicine bottle to make sure you are using the correct medicine and the correct strength.
3. Remove the cap from the top if it is a new bottle.
4. Wipe off the top of the bottle with an alcohol pad. Do not touch the top of the bottle again to keep it clean.

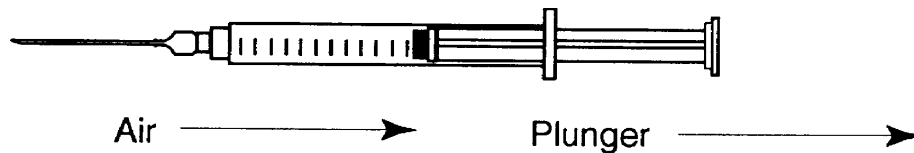


5. Attach the needle to the syringe.

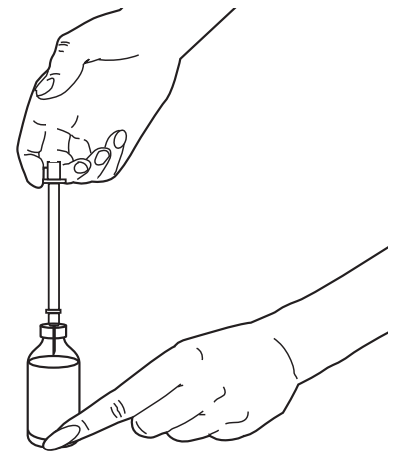


6. Take off the needle cap and place it on the table.

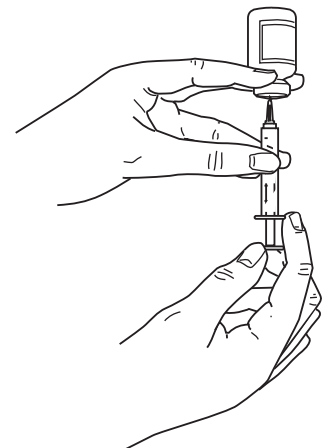
7. The syringe has small lines and numbers marked on it. Pull the plunger of the syringe back, so the dark end of the plunger closest to the needle matches the mL number you need. The syringe will fill with air.



8. Carefully put the needle through the rubber stopper of the bottle. Push the air into the bottle by pushing the plunger all the way down. Putting air in the bottle will make it easier to get the medicine out.



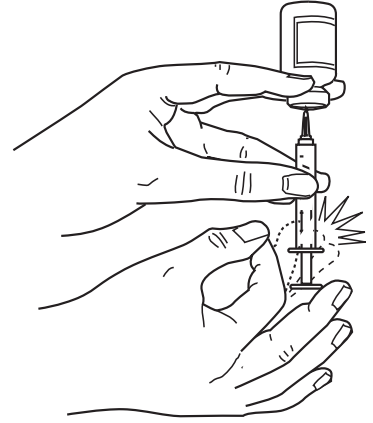
9. Turn the bottle upside down with the syringe still in place. Support the needle in the bottle, so it does not bend. Pull the plunger back slowly to the mL number you need. Medicine will fill into the syringe.



10. Check for air bubbles in the syringe. Air bubbles will not hurt you, but they take up space in the syringe. This could cause you to get less medicine than you need because there is no medicine in the air bubble.

If you see air bubbles:

- Tap the syringe firmly on the side with your fingertip to move the bubbles to the top of the syringe.
- Push the plunger up a little until the air bubbles go back into the bottle.
- Pull back on the plunger and fill the syringe with the correct amount of medicine.
- Check again for air bubbles.



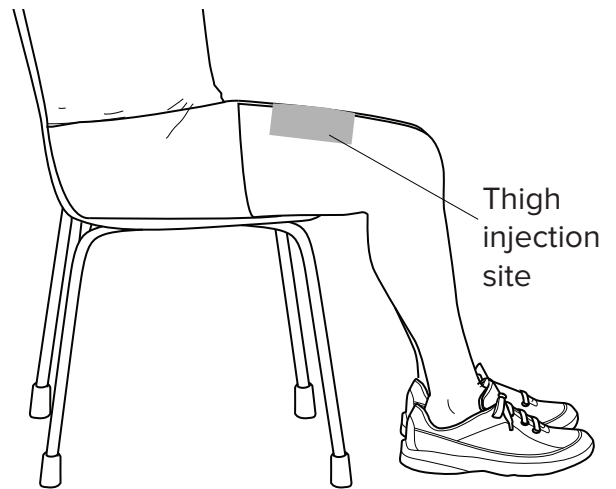
11. Take the needle out of the bottle and set the bottle down.

12. Carefully put the needle cap over the needle.

Giving the medicine

1. Choose the site you will use for the injection. You can use a buttock, hip, thigh or upper arm for an IM injection. Your health care provider can help you choose the site that is best for you.

- The upper arm can only be used for a very small amount of medicine.
- Use the thigh if giving the medicine on your own. If using another site, a caregiver, friend or family member will need to give the injection.
- Use a different spot for each injection.
- Do not use areas that are bruised, tender, swollen or scarred.

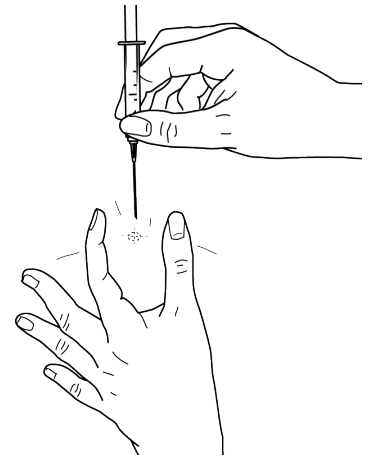


2. Clean the site with an alcohol pad. Let the alcohol dry.

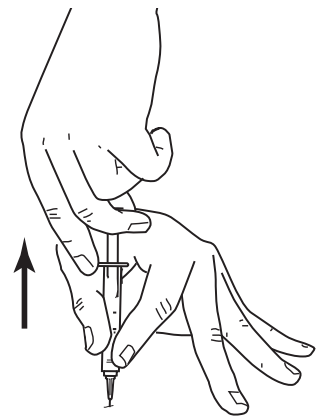


3. Take the needle cap off and set the cap aside.

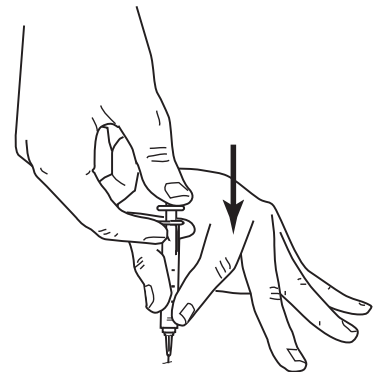
4. Hold the syringe like a dart or pencil as shown in the picture. If you are thin, you may need to pinch the skin up using your thumb and index finger. Be careful not to touch the site itself.
5. Using a quick motion, put the needle straight into the skin at a 90 degree angle (up and down). The quicker you put the needle in, the less it hurts.



6. Release the skin. Hold the syringe so that it will not move. Pull back on the plunger to check for blood in the syringe.
 - If there is blood in the syringe, remove the needle. You will need to throw away this syringe, start over with a new dose of medicine and inject it at a new site.



7. If you do not see any blood in the syringe, inject the medicine by pushing down on the plunger at a slow and steady pace. Be sure to inject all of the medicine from the syringe.

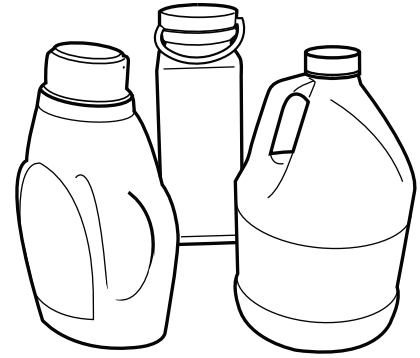


8. Pick up the gauze pad and holding it near the site. Remove the needle. Hold the pad with some pressure on the site for 15 to 30 seconds.
9. Check the site for any redness, bleeding or bruising. Put a band-aid on the site if there is bleeding.

Do not give yourself an injection in the same place every time. For example, use your left thigh one time and your right thigh the next. It may be helpful to write down the spot where you gave your last injection and the date. This way you can make sure you always use a different spot.

Cleaning up the supplies

1. Put the used syringe and needle into a sharps container. You can use a heavy puncture-resistant plastic container with a lid. **Do not** recap the needle. Throw away all the other supplies in the trash.
2. Be sure to store new and used syringes and needles out of the reach of children and pets.
3. Wash your hands again.



Needle Disposal

Tips to reduce pain with injection

- If your medicine is to be stored in the refrigerator, ask your health care provider if the syringe filled with medicine can come to room temperature before it is injected.
- Remove all air bubbles from the syringe before injecting.
- Let the alcohol dry on the skin before putting the needle in.
- Keep the muscles in the injection area relaxed.
- Put the needle into the skin quickly.
- Do not change the direction of the needle as it goes in or comes out of the skin.
- Do not reuse needles.

When to call

Call 911 right away if you have signs of an allergic reaction:

- Get a rash
- Feel itchy
- Have trouble breathing
- Have swelling of tongue, lips or face

Call your health care provider if you have signs of an infection at the injection site:

- Fever of 101 degrees or higher
- Redness or swelling at the site that gets worse several days after the shot
- Hardness under the skin or the site is soft and painful

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.