

How to Give a Subcutaneous (Sub-Q) Injection

A subcutaneous (sub-Q) injection delivers medication into the fatty tissue just beneath the skin. This method is commonly used for hormones, insulin, and other injectable medications.

1. Prepare Your Medication

1. Wash your hands.
2. Clean the vial top with an alcohol swab.
3. Draw air into the syringe equal to your prescribed dose.
4. Insert the needle into the vial and inject the air.
5. Turn the vial upside down and slowly draw up the medication.
6. Remove any air bubbles and confirm the correct dose.



2. Choose an Injection Site

Common sites include:

- Abdomen (at least 2 inches from the belly button)
- Front or outer thigh
- Back of the upper arm

Tip: Rotate injection sites each time to prevent irritation. Clean the skin with an alcohol swab and allow it to dry before injecting.

3. Give the Injection

1. Gently pinch the skin.
2. Insert the needle at a 45° or 90° angle as instructed.
3. Slowly push the plunger until all medication is injected.
4. Remove the needle.
5. Apply gentle pressure with gauze or a cotton ball if needed.
6. Place the used needle and syringe in a sharps container.

Safe Needle Disposal

Use a sharps container or a sturdy, puncture-resistant plastic container with a secure lid (such as an empty detergent or thick plastic juice bottle).

Do NOT use: glass containers, paper containers, water bottles, or milk jugs.



Safety Tips

- Keep sharps containers away from children and pets.
- Never place loose needles in the trash or recycling.
- When full, seal the container and follow local disposal guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does it hurt?

Most people feel only a brief pinch.

What if I inject in the wrong spot?

Avoid bruised, swollen, scarred, or irritated areas.

What if I miss a dose?

Follow your provider's instructions. Do not double doses unless directed.

Can I reuse a needle or syringe?

No. Always use a new sterile needle and syringe.

Can I inject through clothing?

No. Inject into clean, bare skin.

How should I store my medication?

Follow the instructions on the medication label or from your provider or pharmacist.

Need Help?

It's normal to feel nervous at first. Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions or would like additional instruction.

