



# Giving a subcutaneous injection without using a line

**A step-by-step guide for carers**

Service provided by

**Sirona**  
care & health

# Before you begin

Before giving any prescribed medicine, check the Community Palliative Care Drug Chart for the time that the last dose of an injection was given, and make sure it is ok to give another. Also check when the last oral dose of medication was taken for the same symptom to make sure you are still ok to give more.

Check the dosage and frequency of medication against the Community Palliative Care Drug Chart and then the Carer's Authorisation Chart, making sure it is ok to give another dose.

## 1. Preparing.

Wash your hands with warm water and soap and dry well with a clean towel or kitchen roll. Put on gloves and apron.



## 2. Assemble all the equipment you need.

Check the packaging of all the equipment is intact and that products have not passed their expiry dates.

Equipment needed:

- Blunt fill needle 18G
- Safety needle 25G
- Syringe
- Carers Authorisation Chart
- Tray or clean area to draw up
- Drug to be given
- Sharps bin

### 3. Drawing up medication:

Check the label for medication name and strength making sure it matches the drug listed in the Community Palliative Care Drug Chart. Also check the expiry date.

Attach the blunt fill needle 18G to the syringe

If the medicine is in a glass container, break this open by snapping the top off.

The container should be held in an upright position. Check all the fluid has been removed from the neck. If not, gently flick the top until the fluid runs back down into it. If there is a dot on the container, ensure the dot is facing away from you. Hold the container in one hand, using the other hand to snap the neck away from you.

If you have a plastic container - simply twist the top until it is removed.

Do not discard any of the containers until all of the paperwork has been completed.

Draw up the drug into the syringe

If you have an air bubble into the syringe, push the plunger in very slightly to remove the bubble.

Change the needle to the safety needle 25G

#### 4. Assess the injection sites.

Assess the injection site for signs of inflammation, oedema (swelling), infection and skin lesions. If you see any of these, you should use a different site. Wash and dry your hands again and put on a fresh pairs of gloves. Remove the cap from the needle on the prepared syringe.

When giving a subcutaneous injection, it is important to gently pinch the skin between the thumb and the first finger of your non dominant hand to form a fold of skin.

Hold the syringe between the thumb and forefinger of the dominant hand as if grasping a dart.

Insert the needle into the skin at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ . Press the plunger of the syringe and inject the medicine smoothly and slowly. When all the medicine has been injected remove the needle. Do not massage the area.

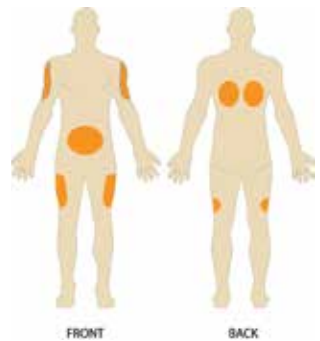
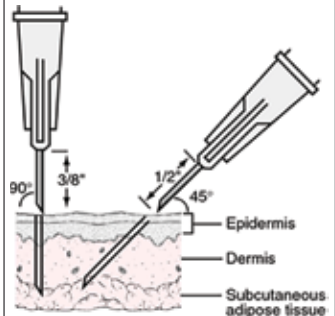


Image of best sites for injection



(The Free Dictionary by Farlex, access 19/04/22 Subcutaneous injection | definition of subcutaneous injection by Medical dictionary (thefreedictionary.com) )



## **When to seek support**

If you have given three injections in a 24 hour period, please contact Sirona care & health SPA (community nurses) on 0300 125 6789 (1st line) or the relevant hospice: St Peter's Hospice advice line 0117 9159430 or Weston Hospice advice line: 01934 423900.

Please remember you can also ring for advice if you feel the injections are not working or need any advice.

## **Needle stick injury**

If you pierce or puncture your skin with a used needle, follow this first aid advice immediately:

- Encourage the wound to bleed, ideally by holding it under running water.
- Wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap.
- Don't scrub the wound while you're washing it.
- Don't suck the wound.
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing.
- Contact Avon Occupational Health on 0117 342 3400 for further advice within an hour.

(Adapted from: The Lincolnshire Policy for Informal Carer's Administration of As Required Subcutaneous Injections in Community Palliative Care. Lincolnshire Community Health Services. Version 10. 2018. St Joseph's Hospice Carer Administration of sub-cutaneous injections procedure. Version 2. 2019)



## Let us know what you think and get involved

**T:** 0300 124 5300\*

**E:** [sirona.hello@nhs.net](mailto:sirona.hello@nhs.net)

**W:** [www.sirona-cic.org.uk](http://www.sirona-cic.org.uk)

\*Calls from landlines are charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles vary, please check with your network provider. This is not a premium-rate number.

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