Subcutaneous Injection, How to Give

A subcutaneous injection (sub-cue-TAY-nee-us in-JECK-shun) is giving medicine into the tissue just below the skin. It is given with a special syringe and a very small needle. The injection (shot) can be given in the legs, arms, or belly. You should give the injection in a different place each day. Avoid areas near bruises, scars, or the belly button.

Sometimes the syringe has been prefilled with medicine and is ready to use. At other times, you have to fill the syringe with medicine from a vial. This is a small glass container with a rubber stopper on the top. By piercing the vial’s rubber stopper with a needle, you can draw out the right amount of medicine for your child.

What equipment do I need?
- Alcohol swab
- Vial with medicine
- Syringe with needle
- Prefilled syringe

How do I prepare medicine from a prefilled syringe?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the cap from the syringe.
3. Check to see if the plunger’s black tip is even with the line for your child’s dose. You may have to waste some of the medicine in the prefilled syringe if there’s too much in it for your child. Your doctor will tell you how much medicine to give your child.

How do I draw up medicine from a vial?

4. Wash your hands.
5. Wipe the rubber top of the medicine bottle with an alcohol swab.
6. Remove the cap from the syringe.

7. Pull air into the syringe by pulling back on the plunger until the plunger’s black tip is even with the line showing the amount your child needs. (Your healthcare provider will tell you the correct amount for your child.)
8 Push the needle through the rubber top of the bottle.

9 Push the syringe plunger so that the air goes from the syringe into the bottle. Air takes the place of the liquid so you don’t suck air into the bottle after you take the medicine out.

10 Turn the medicine bottle and syringe upside down.

11 Pull the medicine into the syringe by slowly pulling back on the plunger until the top of the black tip is even with the line showing your child’s dose.

How do I give my child the injection?

1 Choose a place to put the injection and wipe the skin with an alcohol swab. If you will be giving the medicine for a long time (like insulin), do not swab with an alcohol swab. It makes the skin tough over time.
2 Gently pinch the skin. Hold the syringe at a 90-degree angle (straight up) to the skin, and push the needle all the way in.

3 Let go of the pinched skin, and slowly push the plunger to inject all of the medicine. Count to 10 (about 5 seconds) before pulling the needle out. Hold the injection site with a finger or thumb with moderate pressure for 2–5 minutes.

4 Put the used syringe in a plastic or metal container with a tight lid. Don’t put it directly into the trash. When the container is full, be sure the lid is closed and put the container in the trash.

5 If there is bleeding at the injection site, hold pressure on the site for 5–10 minutes.

Are there any things that I should watch out for?
- Do not move the needle once you’ve insert it into the skin. This will help reduce bleeding and bruising.
- Do not pull back on the needle once you’ve insert it.
- Do not rub, knead, or massage the site. This will help reduce bleeding and bruising.