How to Give a Subcutaneous (SC) Injection to Your Child

Supplies:

Needles and syringes  
Alcohol swabs or gauze  
Vial with the drug solution  
Sharps® container (Health Facts for You #4587)  
Band-Aids

Before you begin:

Wash hands well with soap and water. Gather the supplies for the injection and place them on a clean, dry surface.

Note: If your syringe is already drawn up, skip steps 2-6.

1. Screw a needle on the syringe hub.

2. Vial: Flip off the plastic top. Use an alcohol swab and wipe the rubber stopper.

3. Take the cover off the needle. To draw air into the syringe, pull the plunger back to the desired volume, _________ mL. (See picture A)
Put the needle straight into the vial through the rubber stopper. Inject air into the bottle by pushing down on the plunger. (See picture B)

4. Using one hand, turn the vial with the syringe upside down. Be sure the needle is in the bottle and below the fluid level. Pull the plunger back to the correct mark, _________ mL. (See picture C)

5. Check for air bubbles in the syringe. You can remove bubbles by flicking the syringe with your finger.

If the air bubble is at the top of the syringe, push gently on the plunger so the air goes back into the bottle. Before you remove the needle, be sure you have the proper volume in the syringe.

6. Remove the needle from the vial. It is OK to put the cover on the needle for a moment. Be very careful not to stick yourself. Never place the syringe on your work surface unless you put the cap on the needle.
Find your injection site

You will inject into the fatty tissue. Please change the injection sites as taught by your nurse or health care provider. This is called “rotation” and it helps give the different sites a break from getting injections.

**Arms:** Use the back of the arm to make sure you inject into the fatty tissue. This can be hard to do on your own.

![Arms Diagram]

**Thighs:** use middle and outer areas where you can pinch up tissue.

![Thighs Diagram]

**Abdomen:** Do not use the area within one-inch around your child’s navel. Avoid the belt-line area as rubbing may irritate the injection site. Avoid scars from surgery.

![Abdomen Diagram]

**Buttocks:** try to give injection as close to the X, in the shaded areas, in any tissue you can pinch. These sites are usually used for babies but can be used for any age group.

![Buttocks Diagram]
Steps to give the injection

1. Wash your hands again with soap and water. Clean the skin where you will give the shot. You may use soap and water or an alcohol pad. Let the skin dry. Make sure you can clearly see where you will give the shot. Avoid any scars, bruises, or swollen areas.

2. Pull the cap firmly and straight off of the needle to avoid poking yourself. Keep the needle sterile once you have removed the cap; do not set the needle down or touch it. With the hand you use for writing, hold the syringe like a pencil or a dart.

3. With the other hand, gently pinch the cleaned skin between your thumb and fingers to make a fold in the skin. Be sure to hold the skin fold until the injection is done.

4. Insert the needle into the skin fold, holding the syringe at a 90° angle. *(If there is very little fatty tissue, you may inject at a 45° angle. * Ask your health care team what is best for your child.)*

5. Reach up with your pointer finger and press the plunger down until all of the medicine has been pushed into the fatty tissue.

6. Remove the needle by gently and quickly pulling it out and away from the skin fold. You can now let go of the skin fold. **Do not rub the site after you are finished.** Rubbing may bruise the site or change how the medicine is absorbed.

7. Drop the used syringe or pen needle - needle first - into the “Sharps Box” or other hard plastic container. Close the lid and move the box out of the reach of children.
Tips for parents about how to help your child through injections

**Timing:** Develop a routine and stick to it. Include your child in the planning. Who will be present? Where will you do the injections? A safe and comfortable spot in the home is most important, a favorite chair, laying in bed or sitting in someone’s lap. What comfort item does your child want during the injection? How will you praise your child after he receives his injection? Will it be a sticker? Will it be a hug? Will it be some screen time?

**Pain control ideas:** Numbing cream is sold over the counter in most pharmacies. While it numbs the skin, it may not fully take care of pain that is felt under the skin. It also takes at least 20 minutes for it to be effective, which may be hard for some children to wait. Ice can help numb the skin area just before the shot. Buzzy Bee is a vibrating tool that can be ordered online through the website, [www.buzzy4shots.com](http://www.buzzy4shots.com). Buzzy stimulates the skin to distract from painful procedures like injections.

**Other distraction ideas:** Playing favorite music, using deep breathing, squeezing a ball and/or playing a TV show or movie during the injection may also soothe children. With practice, you will find what is right for you and your child.