

## Intramuscular Injection Instructions

### 1 WHAT ITEMS DO I NEED TO GIVE AN INTRAMUSCULAR (IM) INJECTION?

- The correct size needle and syringe
- Medication vials
- Alcohol wipes
- Optional: Gloves for the individual administering the injection

### 2 WHERE CAN I ADMINISTER AN IM INJECTION?

There are many sites on the body that are safe to give intramuscular injections. Please follow the injection site directions as detailed by your medical provider or use these instructions as a guide.

#### Precautions:

- It is important to follow these instructions so you do not give the injection directly into nerves, blood vessels, joints or bone.
- Rotate where you give injections. Scar tissue can accumulate and negatively affect the potency of the medication if you give an injection in the same place every day or even every week.

#### Ventrogluteal Muscle (Hip)

The hip has good bone landmarks and poses very little danger of hitting blood vessels or nerves.

- Place your thumb at the base of your tailbone and bring it straight across midway to your hip.
- Put your index finger about 2 inches (5 cm) below the ridge of your hip bone. The V-shaped area between your thumb and index finger is the ventrogluteal muscle.

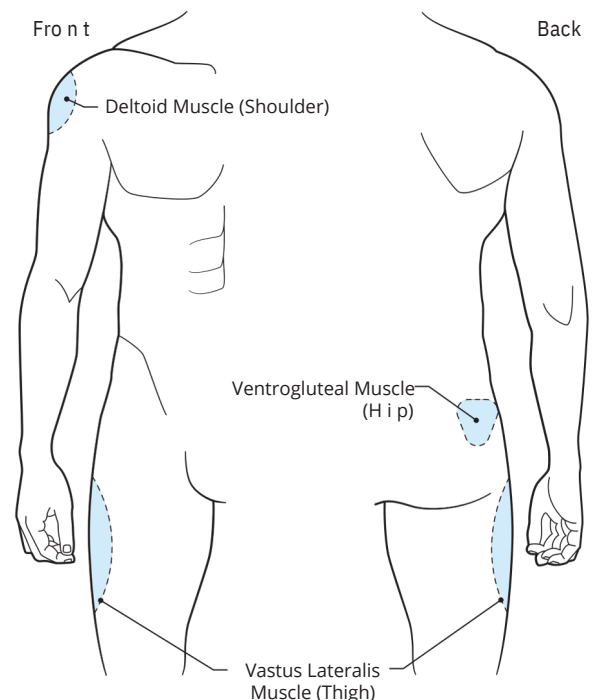
#### Vastus Lateralis Muscle (Thigh)

This is the recommended site for self-injections because it is easy to see and access.

- To find this muscle, divide your top thigh area into three equal parts – top (near your hip), middle, and bottom (near your knee).
- Put your thumb in the middle of the top of the thigh and your fingers along the side. This is the correct muscle location.

#### Deltoid Muscle (Shoulder)

- This site is recommended if someone else will give you the shot. You can sit, stand or lie down to receive the shot. Imagine an upside-down triangle on the side of your upper arm. To find the base of the triangle, feel for the bone that goes across the top of the upper arm. This bone is called the acromion process, and the bottom of this bone will be the base line of the triangle.
- The point of the triangle is directly below the middle of the base at about the level of the armpit. The correct injection area is in the center of the triangle, 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) below the bottom of the acromion process.



Sites on the body where intramuscular injections can be given.

### 3 HOW DO I TRANSFER MEDICATION TO THE SYRINGE?

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and dry them completely. Put on gloves if necessary.
2. Remove the plastic cap from the medication vial and use an alcohol wipe to clean the rubber stopper.
3. With an unused syringe, remove the needle cap and pull back on the plunger to bring an amount of air equal to the prescribed amount of medication.
4. Insert the needle into the vial and slowly push (inject) the air from the syringe into the vial. This action will displace the liquid in the vial when you withdraw the medication (Fig. 1).
5. Turn the vial and syringe upside down and carefully draw the liquid medication back into the syringe to the desired amount needed for one injection (Fig. 2).
6. If you see any air bubbles in the syringe, use your fingers to lightly tap or flick the syringe to draw the bubbles to the top of the syringe near the needle. This action will help expel any air in the syringe. Note: it is normal for a small amount of medication to come out of the needle as well (Fig. 3).
7. You are now ready to inject.

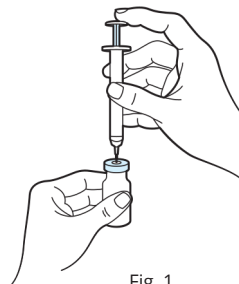


Fig. 1

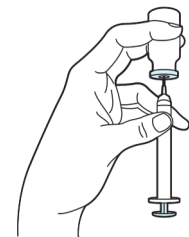


Fig. 2

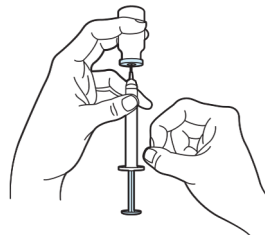


Fig. 3

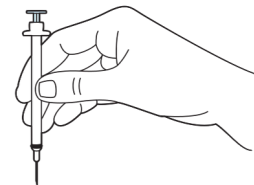


Fig. 4

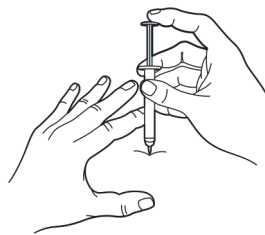


Fig. 5

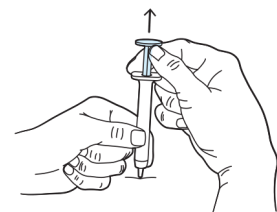


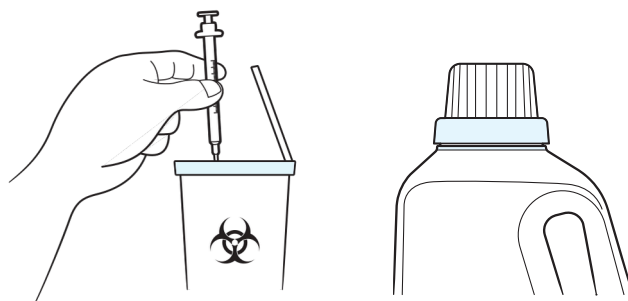
Fig. 6

### 4 HOW DO I INJECT THE MEDICATION INTO MY BODY?

1. After completing all the steps in Section 3, hold the syringe in the hand you use to write. Place the syringe between your thumb and first finger. Let the barrel of the syringe rest on your second finger similarly to how you hold a pen. Wipe the injection site area with an alcohol wipe. Let the area dry.
2. Depress and pull the skin taut with your free hand. Keep holding the skin with your fingers a little to the side of where you plan to insert the needle.
3. Use your wrist to insert the needle at a 90-degree angle (straight in). The action is like shooting a dart (Fig. 4). Do not slowly push the needle in. Do not thrust the needle as this can cause bruising. The needle is sharp, and it will go through the skin easily when your wrist action is correct (Fig. 5).
4. Let go of the skin. As you let go of the skin, hold the syringe so it stays pointed straight in.
5. Pull back on the plunger just a little to make sure you aren't in a blood vessel (Fig. 6).  
Note: If blood enters the syringe, you may have hit a blood vessel. Remove the needle and dispose of both the syringe and the medicine. Repeat the process of cleaning and filling a new syringe. When you administer the injection again, select a new injection site.
6. Push down firmly on the plunger to inject the medication into the body.  
Note: Some medications may sting slightly upon injection.
7. Pull the needle out quickly once all the medication is injected, at the same angle it went in.
8. Dispose of the syringe and needle in a sharps container.

### 5 HOW CAN I DISPOSE OF USED SYRINGES AND NEEDLES?

A sharps container is made of hard plastic and is needed to properly dispose of needles and syringes. You can purchase a sharps container or use another plastic container, such as an empty laundry detergent bottle. You must make sure you can easily put both the syringe and needle into the container and that the needle cannot break through the sides, bottom or top of the container.



For more information about how to properly dispose of sharps, ask your medical provider or local pharmacy for details. More information is available at [safeneedledisposal.org](http://safeneedledisposal.org).