How to Give Yourself a Subcutaneous Injection

A simple, illustrated guide to giving medicine into the fatty tissue just under your skin. Only inject medicine prescribed to you, after your healthcare professional has shown you how.

Before you begin

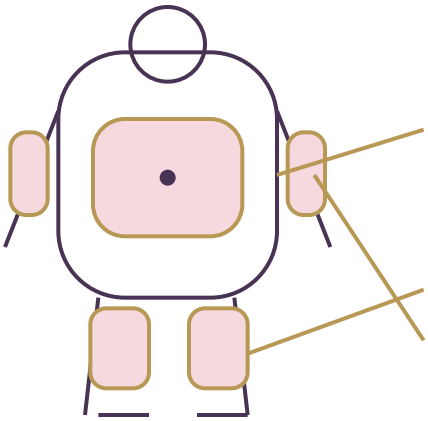
Check your prescription: right medicine, dose, timing, expiration date, and instructions. Pens, prefilled syringes, and vials are different. Follow the instructions for YOUR product. Never guess a dose or convert units without your prescriber or pharmacist.

Gather supplies: prescribed medicine and device, new needle/syringe if required, alcohol swab, clean gauze, and an FDA-cleared sharps container.

Four key stages



Choose a safe injection site



ABDOMEN: belly area
Stay at least 2 inches (5 cm) away from the belly button.

THIGHS: front / outer upper thigh
UPPER ARM: back of upper arm (often needs another person).

Pink areas are general examples; use only sites approved for your medicine.

Rotate sites: choose a different spot each time. Avoid skin that is bruised, scarred, swollen, red, hard, painful, infected, or irritated. Your care team may recommend different locations based on the medication.

Important: If you have not been trained on your specific pen or syringe, stop and contact Sparkle Health before injecting.

Step-by-step: giving the injection

1. Wash and check

Wash your hands with soap and water. Check the medication label, dose, expiration, appearance, and storage instructions. Do not use medicine that looks abnormal for that product.

2. Prepare the device

Follow the exact instructions for your prescribed pen, prefilled syringe, or vial. Attach a NEW needle if required. Prime a pen only if its manufacturer instructs you to. Never share a pen, even with a new needle.

3. Clean the skin

Choose an approved site. Wipe with alcohol and let the skin dry completely. Do not touch the cleaned spot again.

4. Position and inject

Use the angle and skin-fold technique taught for your device. Many short pen needles go in at 90 degrees; some syringes require a pinched skin fold or a different angle. Do not use one technique for every device. Inject the prescribed dose following the device instructions.

5. Finish safely

Keep the needle in place for the time stated in the device instructions, then withdraw. If needed, press gently with clean gauze. Do not rub or massage unless your medicine instructions say to.

6. Dispose immediately

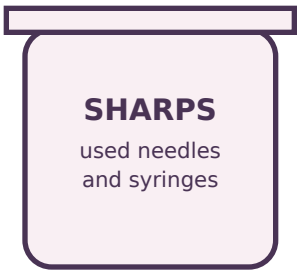
Place the used needle and syringe, or the pen needle, directly into a sharps container. Do not recap, bend, break, or leave it on a counter. Follow your device instructions for removing the needle safely.

Common DOs and DON'Ts

DO	DON'T
Use the exact prescribed dose and schedule.	Guess doses, change frequency, or double up after a missed dose.
Use a new sterile needle/syringe every time.	Reuse needles or share syringes or injection pens.
Rotate injection sites and inspect skin.	Inject into red, bruised, infected, or damaged skin.
Store medication exactly as labeled.	Freeze or heat medication unless its instructions permit it.
Ask your care team about missed doses or problems.	Try to correct a dosing mistake with another injection.

After the injection: needles & safety

Put used needles and syringes in a proper sharps container immediately. Do not put loose sharps in household trash or recycling. Never flush them.



- Rigid, puncture-resistant container with tight lid
- Keep upright, closed, and out of reach of children/pets
- Seal at the fill line (often about 3/4 full)
- Use an approved local drop-off or mail-back program

Where do I take a full sharps container?

Disposal rules vary by community. Ask your pharmacist or local waste authority about approved drop-off sites, household hazardous-waste collection, or sharps mail-back programs. In Arizona, check your city or county waste guidance before disposing of a sealed container. Do not assume a pharmacy will accept sharps.

What is normal - and when should I get help?

Usually mild	Call your provider promptly
Brief sting, tiny spot of blood, or mild redness/tenderness that improves.	Worsening redness, warmth, swelling, pus, fever, increasing pain, or a lump that does not improve.
Mild bruising at the site.	Persistent vomiting/diarrhea, trouble keeping fluids down, dehydration, or severe ongoing abdominal pain (especially with GLP-1 medicines).
Ask about expected medicine-specific side effects.	Wrong dose, wrong medicine, missed dose, needle injury, device malfunction, or uncertainty about how much was injected.

CALL 911 / SEEK EMERGENCY CARE NOW for trouble breathing, swelling of the lips/tongue/throat, fainting, severe confusion, seizures, or symptoms of severe low blood sugar (if relevant to your medication). Do not drive yourself if you feel faint or confused.

Questions or problems? Sparkle Health Aesthetics & Wellness: (623) 606-0677. For nonemergency questions, contact your prescribing clinician or pharmacist before your next dose.

Remember: This handout supports, but does not replace, individual training and the medication's FDA-approved instructions for use. Injection technique, dosing, missed-dose instructions, and side effects vary by medication and device. Patient resources: FDA - Safe Sharps Disposal (fda.gov/safesharpsdisposal); CDC - Injection Safety (cdc.gov/injection-safety); your medicine's package insert / Instructions for Use.