

Giving Medication Using a Subcutaneous Butterfly

What is a subcutaneous butterfly?

- “Subcutaneous ” means under the skin.
- A **subcutaneous butterfly** is a device used to give medication under the skin (for example, when a person cannot swallow medications).
- It may also be called a **cannula, port, SC butterfly, or sub-cut catheter.**

What are the benefits of using a subcutaneous butterfly?

- This is the best way for some medications to get into the body.
- This device can be used for several days before it needs to be changed. This can lower the number of times the person is poked with a needle.

What if the person needs more than 1 medication?

- The person will have a butterfly for each medication.
- The health care team can help you understand why each medication is needed and when to give it.

How do I give medication using a subcutaneous butterfly?

1. Get the syringe of medication and an alcohol swab.
2. **Wash your hands.**
3. Check the medication label on the butterfly and on the syringe to make sure they match.
4. Check the site where the butterfly enters the skin for:
 - › Redness
 - › Swelling
 - › Leaking
 - › Bleeding
 - › Bruising
 - › Pain

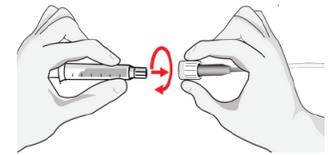
If you see any of these, tell your nurse. If you are not in the hospital, call your VON nurse.

5. Open the alcohol swab. With the swab, clean the end of the butterfly for 15 seconds.
6. **Do not** touch the end while it is drying.
7. Remove the cap from the syringe. **Do not** touch the end of the syringe.
8. Hold the syringe in 1 hand. **Do not** place your hand over the plunger.
9. Hold the end of the butterfly in your other hand.

Butterfly end

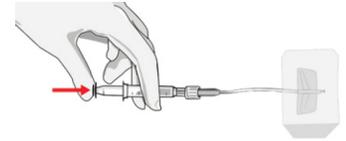


10. Push and twist the syringe into the end of the butterfly until it is attached.



11. Slowly push down on the plunger of the syringe to give the medication.

- **Do not force the plunger.** Stop and call your nurse if:
 - › It is hard to push the plunger
 - › There is leaking from the butterfly
 - › There is a lot of pain (a short stinging or burning feeling is normal for some medications and should go away within a couple of minutes)



12. When the syringe is empty, untwist and remove it from the end of the butterfly.

13. Every time you give a medication, write down:

- › The name of the medication
- › What time you gave the medication
- › Why you gave the medication
- › Whether the medication helped



How do I store syringes?

- Label and store all full syringes in a secure place, out of the reach of children and pets.
- Put used syringes in a garbage that is out of the reach of children and pets.
- If you have full syringes that you do not need, take them to a pharmacy for proper disposal.

Talk with a member of your health care team if you have any questions or concerns.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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