

Self-Administration of Select Subcutaneous Chemotherapy Drugs

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You have been prescribed a drug for your cancer that can be given at home using a needle. Your cancer care team will give you the supplies needed to do this safely. Please read the steps below and call your cancer care team if you have any questions, we are here to help you.

Before you get started:

- Find a comfortable, clean and well-lit space to give your injection. Try to find a place that does not have carpet on the floor, in case the drug leaks.
- Try to give each dose of your injection at the same time each day.

When you are ready to give your injection:

1. Gather your supplies:

- Nitrile gloves
- Needle
- Alcohol swabs
- Sharps container
- Cytotoxic spill kit and instructions
- Gauze
- Blue absorbent pads



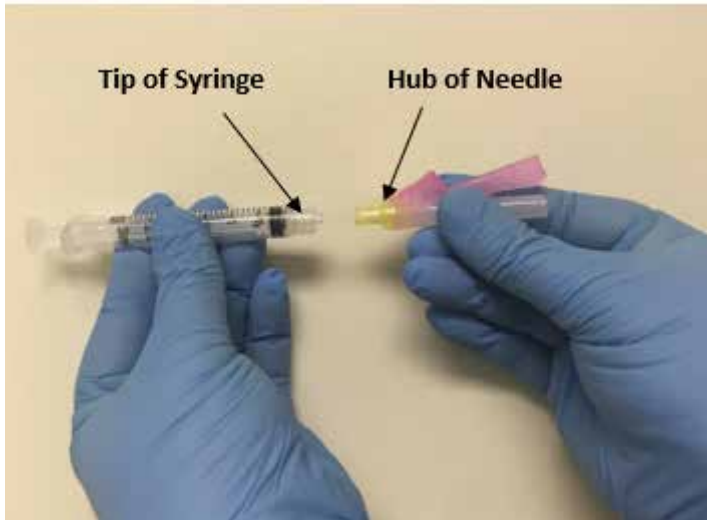
2. Clean your work area with soap and water. Lay out a clean blue absorbent pad. This blue absorbent pad will become your work surface.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water.
4. Look at your drug syringe while it is still in the bag:
 - If it looks like it is leaking, do not open the bag. Put the bag in the sharps container, call your cancer care team, and do not give the injection.
 - If it is not leaking, lay the bag on your work surface.
 - › If the drug has been refrigerated, leave it on your work surface for 20-30 minutes before injecting to allow it to warm to room temperature.

Preparing for the injection:

1. Put on gloves from your supplies.

2. Take the syringe out of the bag and place it on your work surface.
3. If the syringe does not already have a needle attached, open needle package and place package with needle still in it on work surface. If syringe and needle are already connected, go to step 5.

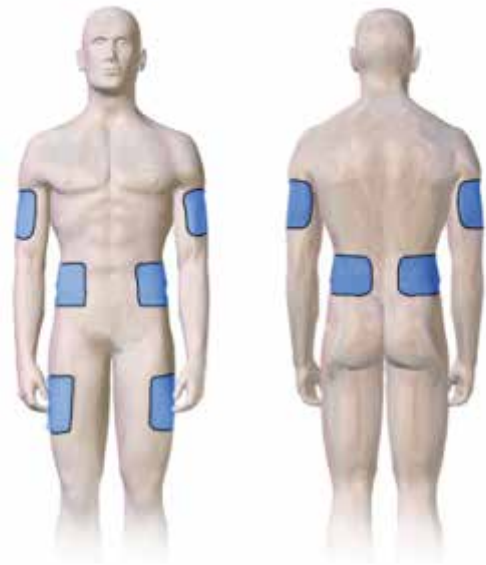
Note: Keep the needle in the package so that it stays clean and be careful not to touch the hub of the needle.



4. Remove the cap from the tip of the syringe and screw on the needle. Be careful not to touch the end of the syringe. **If you touch the hub of the needle or tip of the syringe by mistake before they are connected, do not use them.** Get a new one and start over.
5. Place connected needle and syringe on your work surface.

Choosing and preparing your injection site:

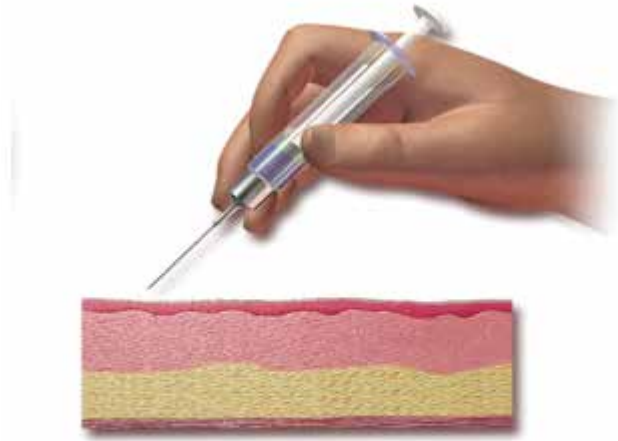
1. Safe areas for subcutaneous injection are places where you can easily “pinch an inch” of fat and include (See picture):
 - top portion of thighs
 - side and back areas on the upper arms
 - areas around the lower abdomen



Sites on the Body Where a Subcutaneous Injection Can Be Given

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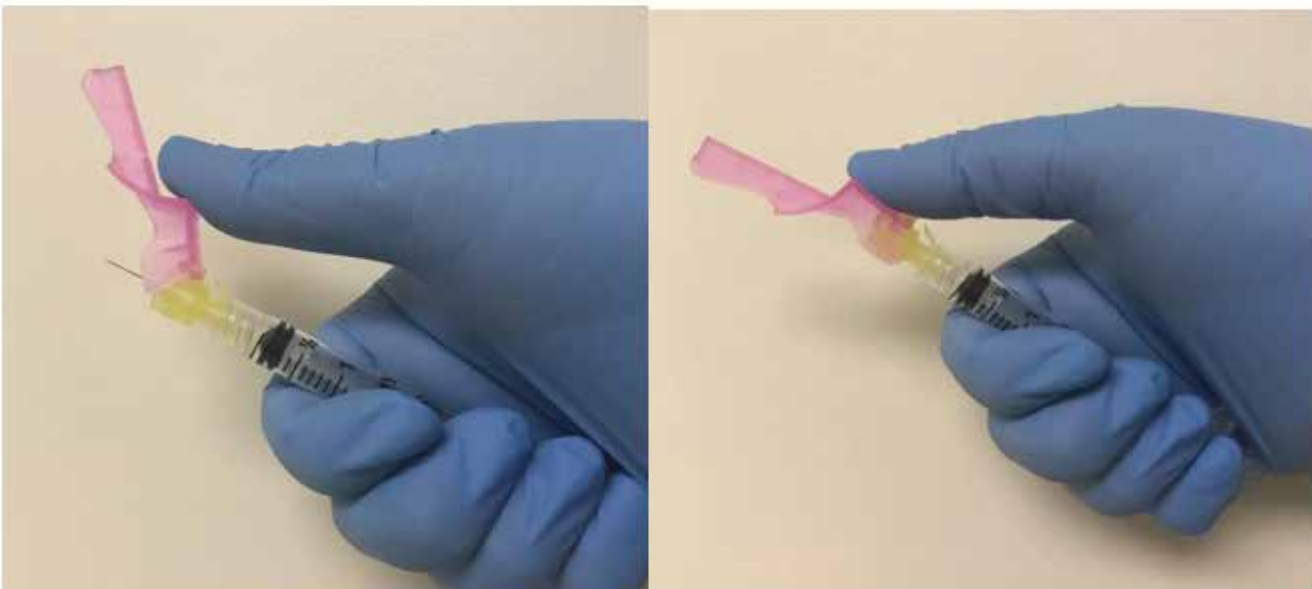
2. Avoid areas to inject the drug:
 - with redness or bruising
 - with moles, scars or tattoos
 - that feel tender or hard
 - the waistband where clothing can press into the injection site
3. Clean the injection area with an alcohol swab. Allow the skin to air dry. Be careful not to let anything touch the area after you have cleaned it.
4. Change the site where you give the injection each time. The new site should be at least 2.5 centimeters (1-2 inches) away from the last injection site. Try not to reuse an injection site more than once every four weeks.



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Injecting the dose:

1. Carefully take the cap off the needle.
2. Pinch your skin with one hand while you hold the syringe in the other. Hold the syringe the way you would hold a pencil and insert the needle into the area at a **45 degree** angle as shown in this picture to the right.
3. Slowly push down on the plunger until it is empty, including the little bit of air at the end. This will help prevent the drug from leaking onto your skin.
4. Release skin, pull the needle out and put a piece of gauze on the injection site. Apply pressure for 5 -10 minutes. **Do not rub the site.**



5. Put the safety cover over the needle. **Do not** replace the cap on the needle.
6. Place entire syringe with needle still attached into the sharps container.
7. Double bag all other supplies, including gloves, and dispose with your regular household waste.
8. Wash your work area and hands with soap and water.
9. Close the sharps container tightly and bring it with you to the Cancer Clinic at your next visit.

Keep a record of your injections including:

- The date and time
- Injection site
- Any reactions to injection

Bring this record with you to your next appointment.

If you have any reactions to your injection or if you notice any new or concerning symptoms, please contact your cancer care team during daytime hours or go to the nearest emergency room.

If you have questions, call your cancer care team:

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/cancer>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health

www.nshealth.ca

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider. The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.