

# How to Give an Intramuscular Injection

## Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Your child's doctor or a member of your child's health care team will talk with you about specific care for your child.

### What is an intramuscular (IM) injection?

An intramuscular injection is a type of "shot". It is a way for your child to take medicine that cannot be taken by mouth. We will show you how to give your child an IM injection. You will give the medicine into a large muscle, such as the outer thigh, outer hip or upper arm. If you want, you may practice on an orange. Please ask your child's nurse if you have any questions.

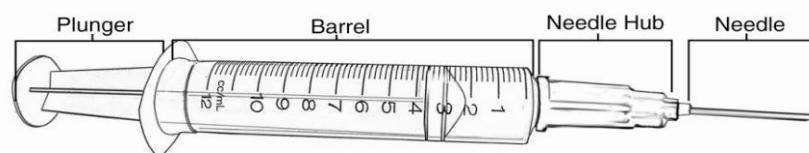
### What supplies will I need?

You will need these supplies:

- alcohol swabs
- 1cc or 3cc syringe
- proper gauge needle
- Band-Aid
- medicine
- dry gauze or tissue

### What steps do I use to prepare the injection?

1. Allow the medicine to come to room temperature if needed. (15-30 minutes)
2. Wash your hands well.
3. Check the medicine for the correct name and dose.
4. Clean the top of the medicine bottle well with an alcohol swab. Let the alcohol dry.
5. If needed, place the needle on the syringe, and remove the cap from the needle. **Do not** touch the needle or set it on any surface while it is uncovered.



Parts of a Syringe

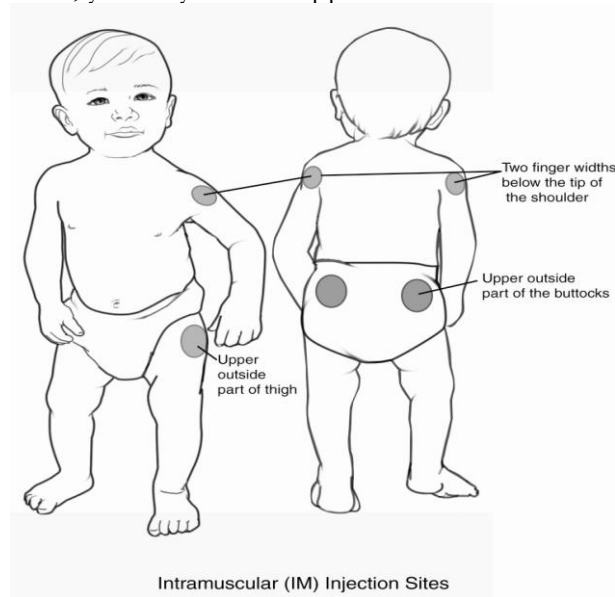
6. Pull air into the syringe equal to the amount of medicine to be given.
7. Insert the needle into the top of the medicine bottle.
8. Push the air into the medicine bottle.
9. Turn the bottle upside down, pull back slowly on the plunger. Fill the syringe with the amount of medicine needed. If there is an air bubble, pull back a little more medicine.
10. If air bubbles are present, tap the side of the syringe, so that the air goes to the top. Push the air out.
11. Check the syringe again to make sure the dose is correct.
12. Take the needle out of the medicine bottle, and replace the cap on the needle.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

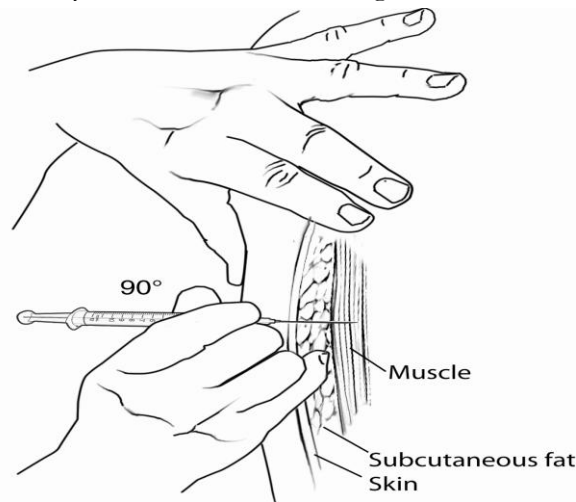
# How to Give an Intramuscular Injection, continued

## What steps do I use to give the injection?

1. Wash your hands well for 15 seconds.
2. Find a site for the injection
  - For small children, use the upper, outer part of the thigh
  - For school age children and teens, you may use the upper arm



3. Clean the site with alcohol using friction. Let the alcohol dry.
4. Hold the muscle firmly between your thumb and index finger.
5. Hold the syringe like a pencil. Quickly insert the needle through the skin at a 90-degree angle.



Intramuscular (IM) Injection Technique

6. Pull back slightly on the plunger to see if blood comes into the syringe.
7. If there is blood, take the needle out, discard the needle and syringe and start over.
8. If the medicine in the syringe is clear of blood, slowly push all the medicine into the tissue.
9. Count to five, then remove the needle. This helps to prevent the medicine from leaking.
10. After you remove the needle, gently press on the site with a dry gauze or tissue until the bleeding stops. Apply a Band-Aid to the site. Give your child a hug and tell him how brave he was.
11. Wash your hands well again.

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# How to Give an Intramuscular Injection, continued

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## How do I dispose of the syringe and needle?

Do not recap the needle or put it in the trash.

- **In the hospital**, dispose of the needle and syringe in a “sharps” container in your child’s room.
- **At home**, dispose of the needle and syringe in a hard, sealed plastic container like a bleach bottle. **Keep the container in a safe place.** Do not use containers made of glass or thin plastic, like a milk jug. Cover the container and throw it away before it becomes very full.

Be very careful and take your time when you handle a syringe. If you poke yourself after the medicine has been given, wash the area with soap and water and apply hydrogen peroxide to the site. Then call your child’s doctor.

## Helpful hints:

- Try to give the medicine in the same way and in the same room each time. Do not give it in a “safe place” like your child’s bedroom.
- Do not give the injection in the same spot each time. Write down the site you use each time and give each injection in a new site.

## How can I prepare my child for the injection?

Prepare your child just before giving the injection. Be honest with your child—the shot will hurt, but the pain will only last for a short time. Tell your child it is OK to cry and look away, but that he should keep very still.

- **For an infant or toddler:** Give him a toy to hold or let him squeeze someone’s hand. A young child may need to have another person hold and comfort him while you give the injection.
- **For an older child:** Explain what you are going to do and why. Give your child a toy or book to hold, or something else to focus on like TV, music, or blowing bubbles. Your older child may want to help by gathering supplies, cleaning the injection site, or putting on the Band-Aid.
- Always praise your child for his help.

## Your Checklist

This list can help you keep track of what you need to know about how to give your child an injection. Ask your child’s nurse or doctor for help if you need more information.

## Before you go home, be sure you know:

- What supplies and medicine you need
- What the use, dose and side effects of the medicine are
- If the medicine has any interactions with other medicines or food
- How to draw up the medicine into the syringe
- How to choose and rotate the injection sites
- How to give your child the IM injection
- How to dispose of the needle and syringe
- How to obtain supplies
- When to call the doctor or healthcare provider for questions or problems

Notes \_\_\_\_\_  
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