

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small glass vial with a silver cap. A syringe with a blue plunger is inserted into the vial's opening, drawing out a clear liquid. The syringe has markings and the text 'SINGLE USE' and '2 ml' visible. Another hand is visible at the bottom right, holding the syringe's plunger. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

How to: Intramuscular Injection

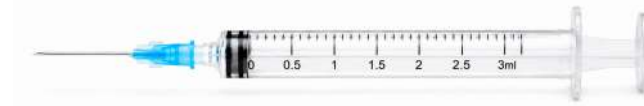
How to: Administer an Intramuscular Injection

PATIENT GUIDE

This guide covers where to give an intramuscular (IM) injection and how to administer it step by step.

Reading Your Intramuscular Syringe

Injectable medications administered Intramuscularly often use a 3mL syringe and a 25 gauge needle though this can vary. Reading the markings correctly is essential to taking the right dose.



- Check that you are using the correct syringe capacity, such as a 3 mL syringe
- On most 3 mL syringes, each small line represents 0.1 mL and each numbered line represents 0.5 mL
- Hold the syringe at eye level and pull the plunger back until the needle side edge of the black stopper aligns with your prescribed dose in mL
- The 25-gauge measurement refers to the needle's thickness and does not affect the dose measurement



Where to Inject

An intramuscular (IM) injection delivers medication deep into a muscle, where it can be absorbed into the bloodstream. Common IM injection sites include the following:

Find the **outer side of your hip**, below the hip bone and above the top of your thigh.



Divide your **outer thigh** from hip to knee into thirds and locate the outer side of the middle section.



Find the thickest part of your **upper arm** muscle, about two to three finger widths below the bony top of your shoulder.



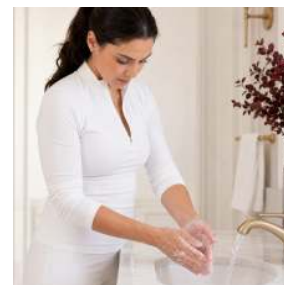
Rotate to a slightly different spot or alternate between sides (right vs left) each time you inject, and avoid any area that is bruised, scarred, tender, or irritated from a previous injection.

How to Administer the Injection

Here's a [video](#) from a pharmacy partner on how to administer an intramuscular injection.

Preparing to Inject

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Gather your syringe, medication vial, and an alcohol swab
- Confirm you're using the syringe the pharmacy provided for the intramuscular injection: IM needles are typically longer than those used for subcutaneous injections
- Clean the injection site with an alcohol swab and let it air dry completely before injecting



Giving the Injection

- Relax the muscle at the injection site as much as possible
- Hold the syringe like a dart and insert the needle at a 90 degree angle in one smooth motion
- Inject the medication slowly and steadily
- Withdraw the needle at the same angle you inserted it



After the Injection

- Wipe the injection site with an alcohol swab after the injection.
- Apply gentle pressure with a cotton ball or gauze at the site if needed
- Dispose of the needle right away in an approved sharps container: never reuse a needle
- If you need a sharps container, you can purchase one from a retailer (like [Amazon](#) or Walmart), your local pharmacy, or medical supply store
- Take full sharps containers to a local pharmacy or local doctor's office for disposal, or check your state's disposal rules for other option



Tips for a More Comfortable Injection

- Let the alcohol on your skin dry fully before inserting the needle to avoid stinging.
- Keeping the muscle relaxed, rather than tensed, can make the injection more comfortable
- Inject at a steady, moderate pace rather than very quickly or very slowly
- Keep track of your injection sites so you can rotate through them each time you inject

Questions About This Process

Ask your clinical team through the portal if you have any questions or concerns.

This Information is made available to you through Altro. All content was provided, reviewed, and approved by the medical director of the clinical team.

