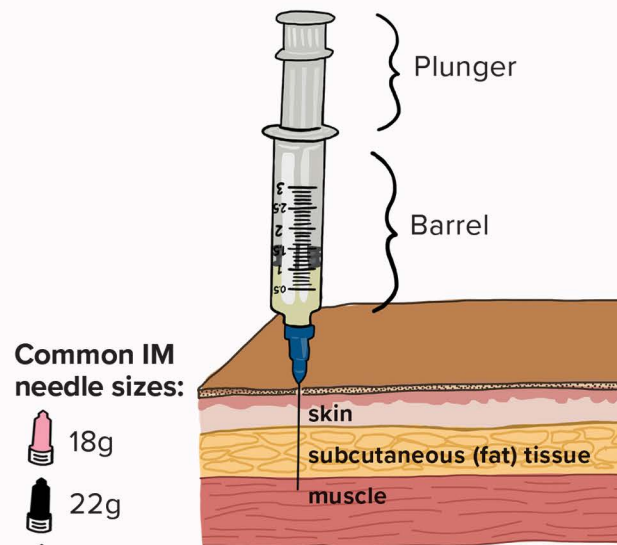
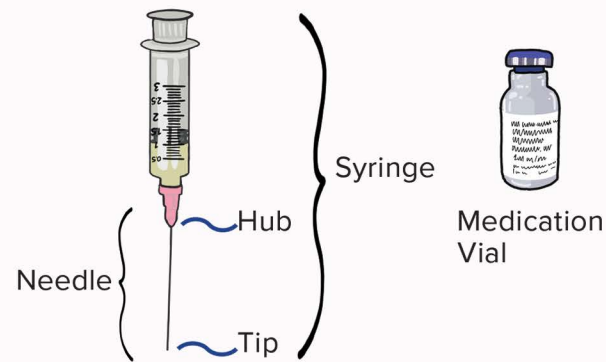


Safer intramuscular (IM) injections



What is an intramuscular (IM) injection?

A process that uses a sterile needle to deliver medication into a muscle.



Common IM needle sizes:



Needle length:
1 or 1 1/2 inches

1 Prevent Infection

Wash your hands: use soap & water, hand sanitizer or alcohol swabs

Use new, sterile equipment each time

Supplies Checklist

- ☐ A clean surface
- ☐ 18g needle (to draw up the medicine)
- ☐ 22/23g needle (1 or 1 1/2 inches for self-injection)
- ☐ 2 alcohol swabs
- ☐ syringe (1-3ml)
- ☐ cotton swab or tissue
- ☐ bandage
- ☐ sharps container
- ☐ medication (know your dose)

Talk to your care provider about how to choose the right supplies for you (ex. barrel size, needle gauge & length)

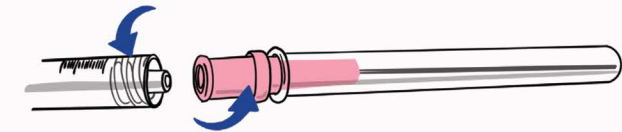
2 Prepare Syringe

Get medicine ready

- Clean top of vial with alcohol swab

Attach needle to barrel

- Open wrappers for 18g needle and barrel
- Using twisting motion to connect needle and barrel
- **Tip:** Prevent the connection points from touching surfaces

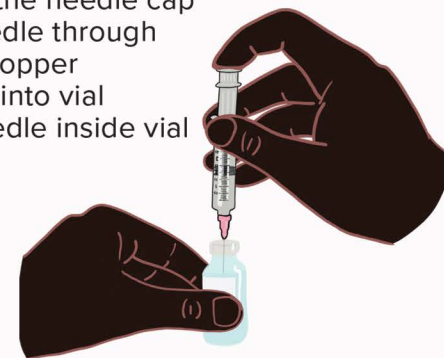


Draw air in to the syringe

- Pull the plunger back to draw air into the syringe
- Draw up the same amount of air as your dose

Inject air into vial

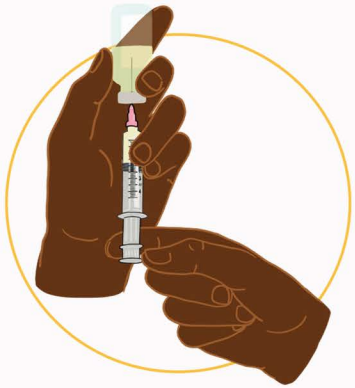
- Remove the needle cap
- Push needle through rubber stopper
- Inject air into vial
- Keep needle inside vial



3 Withdraw Medication

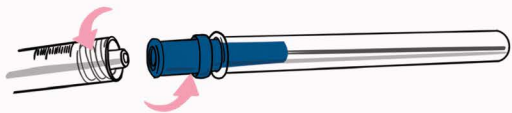
Withdraw medication

- Turn needle and vial upside down
- Keep needle tip in the liquid
- Pull plunger to withdraw medication



Remove air bubbles

- With the needle pointing upwards, flick syringe to push any bubbles to the top
- Gently press the plunger to push bubbles out
- **Make sure** you have the **correct dose**
- Remove needle from vial
- Recap needle
- **Tip:** If small air bubbles remain, they are **not dangerous**



Switch needles

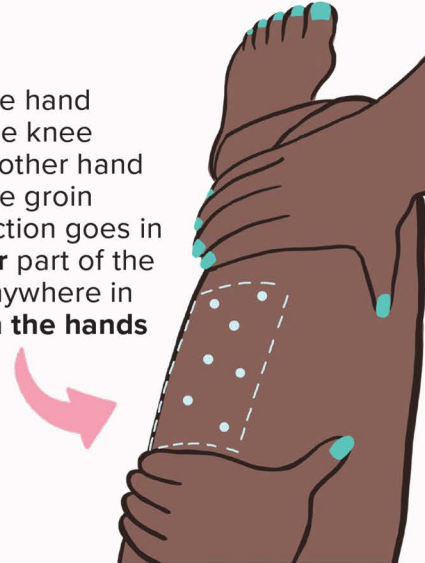
- To prevent wasting medication, pull a big air bubble into syringe
- Twist off 18g needle top and dispose in sharps
- Attach preferred needle (22g or 23g)
- Push the air bubble out and recheck your dose

4 Find Injection Site

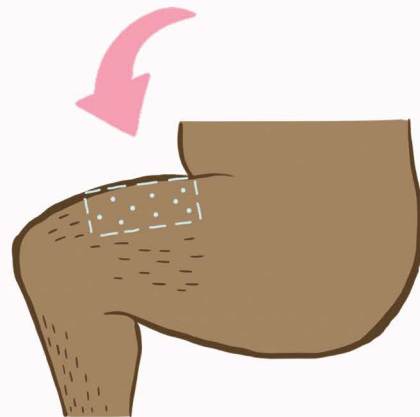
The **vastus lateralis** is the muscle on the **upper, outer** part of the thigh

To find it:

- Place one hand above the knee
- Place another hand below the groin
- The injection goes in the **outer** part of the **thigh**, anywhere in **between the hands**

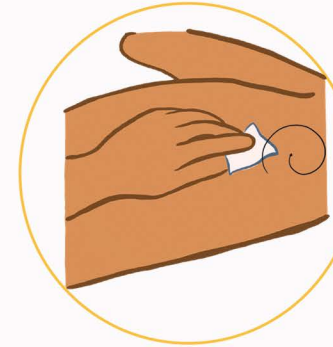


- Use a different site every time you inject
- Choose a spot with no swelling, hardness, irritation or bruising
- Avoid injecting into scar tissue if possible



5 Give Injection

With **clean hands**, use alcohol swab on injection site



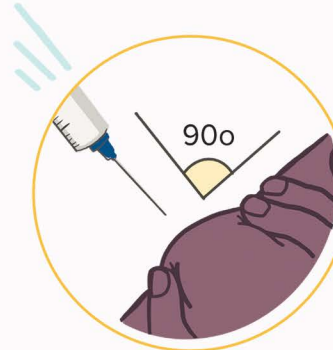
Wipe from the centre and spiral outwards

Dry for 30-60 seconds

Gently pinch up skin around the site



Take a deep breath and relax your muscle



Hold the needle at 90 degrees

Insert the needle quickly, with a smooth motion



6 Finish Injection

Release skin

Slowly push plunger to inject medicine - you may feel a bit of stinging or pressure, that is ok



Hold needle in place for 10 seconds

Pull needle out in one smooth motion

Dispose needle in sharps container



Use a cotton swab to apply gentle pressure until bleeding stops

Apply bandage



Find and return injection supplies in BC:
towardtheheart.com/site-finder