How To Prepare and Give a Prefilled Syringe Injection

Patient Education Quick Reference Guide

The following are instructions for use of prefilled syringes. When you receive your medication, always check to see that:

- The expiration date on the prefilled syringe label has not passed. You should not use a prefilled syringe after the date on the label.
- The strength of the medication is the same as your doctor prescribed.
- The liquid in the prefilled syringe is clear and colorless. Do not use the medication if the contents of the prefilled syringe appear discolored or cloudy, or if the prefilled syringe appears to contain lumps, flakes, or particles.

IMPORTANT: TO HELP AVOID POSSIBLE INFECTION, YOU SHOULD FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

Setting Up for an Injection

1. Find a clean flat working surface, such as a table.

2. Remove the prefilled syringe from the refrigerator. Allow the medication to reach room temperature (this takes about 30 minutes). DO NOT SHAKE THE PREFILLED SYRINGE. Shaking may damage the medication. If the prefilled syringe has been shaken vigorously, the solution may appear foamy and it should not be used.

3. Assemble the supplies you will need for an injection:
   - The prefilled syringe with needle guard attached
Setting Up for an Injection (continued)

- two alcohol swabs and one cotton ball or gauze pad

- puncture-proof disposal container

4. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.

Preparing the Dose of Your Medication in a Prefilled Syringe

1. Remove the syringe from the package and the tray. Check to see that the plastic needle guard is covering the barrel of the glass syringe. **DO NOT push the needle guard over the needle cover before injection.** This may activate or lock the needle guard. If the needle guard is covering the needle that means it has been activated. Do NOT use that syringe. Dispose of that syringe in the puncture-proof disposal container. Use a new syringe from the package.
Preparing the Dose of Your Medication in a Prefilled Syringe (continued)

2. Hold the syringe barrel through the needle guard windows with the needle pointing up. Holding the syringe with the needle pointing up helps to prevent medicine from leaking out of the needle. Carefully pull the needle cover straight off.

3. Check the syringe for air bubbles. If there are air bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe.

4. Push the plunger up to the number (mL) on the syringe that matches the dose of the medication that your doctor prescribed.

5. Check again to make sure the correct dose of the medication is in the syringe.

6. Gently place the prefilled syringe with the window flat on your clean working surface so that the needle does not touch anything.

Selecting and Preparing the Injection Site

1. Choose an injection site. Four recommended injection sites for your medication are:
   - The outer area of your upper arms
   - The abdomen, except for the two inch area around your navel
   - The front of your middle thighs
   - The upper outer areas of your buttocks
Selecting and Preparing the Injection Site (continued)

2. Choose a new site each time you inject your medication. Choosing a new site can help avoid soreness at any one site. Do not inject the medication into an area that is tender, red, bruised, or hard or that has scars or stretch marks.

3. Clean the injection site with a new alcohol swab.

Injecting the Dose of Medication

1. Pick up the prefilled syringe from your clean flat working surface by grabbing the sides of the needle guard with your thumb and forefinger.

2. Hold the syringe in the hand you will use to inject the medication. Use the other hand to pinch a fold of skin at the cleaned injection site. Note: If using a prefilled syringe with a needle guard, hold the syringe barrel through the needle guard windows when giving the injection.

3. Holding the syringe like a pencil, use a quick "dart-like" motion to insert the needle either straight up and down (90 degree angle) or at a slight angle (45 degrees) into the skin.
4. After the needle is inserted, let go of the skin. Pull the plunger back slightly. If no blood appears, slowly push down on the plunger all the way, until all the medication is injected. **If blood comes into the syringe, do not inject the medication, because the needle has entered a blood vessel.** Withdraw the syringe and discard it in the puncture-proof container. Repeat the steps to get a new prefilled syringe and choose and clean a new injection site. Remember to check again for blood before injecting the medication.

5. When the syringe is empty, pull the needle out of the skin and place a cotton ball or gauze over the injection site and press for several seconds.

6. Use a prefilled syringe with the needle guard only once.
Activating the Needle Guard for the Prefilled Syringe After the Injection Has Been Given

1. After injecting the medication from the prefilled syringe, do not recap the needle. Keep your hands behind the needle at all times. While holding the clear plastic finger grip of the syringe with one hand, grasp the orange needle guard with your free hand and slide the needle guard over the needle until the needle is completely covered and the needle guard clicks into place. **NOTE:** If an audible click is not heard, the needle guard may not be completely activated.

![Image of needle guard being activated](image)

2. Place the prefilled syringe with the activated needle guard into a puncture-proof container for proper disposal as described below.

Disposal of Syringes, Needles, and Needle Guards

You should always follow the instructions given by your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist on how and where to properly dispose of containers with used syringes, needles, and needle guards. There may be special state and local laws for disposal of used needles and syringes.

- Do not put the needle cover back on the needle.
- Place all used needles, needle covers, syringes, and vials (empty or unused contents) into a "Sharps" container given to you by your doctor or pharmacist or in a hard-plastic container with a screw-on-cap, or a metal container with a plastic lid, such as a coffee can, labeled "used syringes." If a metal container is used, cut a small hole in the plastic lid and tape the lid to the metal container. If a hard-plastic container is used, always screw the cap on tightly after each use.
- Do not use glass or clear plastic containers.
- When the container is full, tape around the cap or lid to make sure the cap or lid does not come off. **Do not recycle.**
- **Always** keep the container out of the reach of children.

How Should Your Medications Be Stored?

Your medication should be stored in the refrigerator at 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F), but not in the freezer. Avoid shaking the medication. Do not leave the medication in direct sunlight. If you have any questions about storage or how to carry your medication when you travel, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
Notes

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