How To Prepare and Give an Injection From a Vial

When you receive your medication vials and syringes, always check to see that:

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

Use only the disposable syringes and needles your doctor prescribes. Use the syringes only once and dispose of them as instructed by your doctor or nurse.

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 vial of medication from the refrigerator. Allow the medication to reach room temperature (this takes about 30 minutes). Vials should be used only once. DO NOT SHAKE THE VIAL. Shaking may damage the medication. If the vial 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 medication vial and disposable syringe and needle
• two alcohol swabs and one cotton ball or gauze pad

• puncture-proof disposal container

4. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.

Preparation of the Dose of the Medication in a Vial

1. Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab.
Preparing the Dose of the Medication in a Vial (continued)

2. Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use that syringe. Dispose of that syringe in the puncture-proof disposal container. If the syringe package is undamaged, open the package and remove the syringe.

3. Pull the needle cover straight off the syringe. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose of the medication that your doctor prescribed.

4. Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the rubber stopper. Do not put the needle through the rubber stopper more than once.

5. Push the plunger of the syringe down and inject the air from the syringe into the vial.

6. Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down. Make sure that the medication liquid is covering the tip of the needle.

7. Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the liquid to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your doctor prescribed.

8. Keeping the needle in the vial, check for air bubbles in the syringe. If there are air bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Then slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe.
Preparing the Dose of the Medication in a Vial (continued)

9. Keeping the tip of the needle in the liquid, once again pull the plunger back to the number on the syringe that matches your dose. Check again for air bubbles. The air in the syringe will not hurt you, but too large an air bubble can reduce your dose of the medication. If there are still air bubbles, repeat the steps above to remove them.

10. Check again to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your doctor. Remove the syringe from the vial but do not lay it down or let the needle touch anything.

Selecting and Preparing the Injection Site

1. Choose an injection site. Four recommended injection sites for the 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

2. Choose a new site each time you inject the 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 the Medication

1. For injecting the dose of the medication from a vial, 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 prepare a new syringe and choose and clean a new injection site. Remember to check again for blood before injecting the medication.

4. 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.

5. Use a syringe and vial only once. If you are using a syringe, **DO NOT** put the needle cover (the cap) back on the needle. Discard the vial with any remaining liquid.
Disposal of Syringes, Needles, Vials 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, vials 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 Medication 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 the medication when you travel, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Notes

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