

Information for
patients & families

Subcutaneous Chemotherapy Self-Injection



Treatment - Systemic

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Setting up for your self-injection

Try to give yourself an injection at the same time each day.

1. Supplies needed:

- Drug specific teaching
- Spill kit
- Sharps container
- Antiseptic wipes
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Needle

2. Take a dose of your medication out of the refrigerator **before** your injection so it can warm to room temperature. See drug specific teaching for timing.

3. Find a comfortable, clean and well-lit working area. Try to find a place that doesn't have carpet on the floor, in case the chemotherapy leaks.

- If the syringe is leaking, do not open the bag. Put the bag in the chemotherapy sharps container and call the cancer centre pharmacy. The phone number will be on the syringe label.

4. Clean your work area with soap and water. Lay out a clean paper towel to use as a surface to work on.

5. Wash your hands with soap and water.



Preparing for the injection

1. Put goggles and gloves on from your supplies.

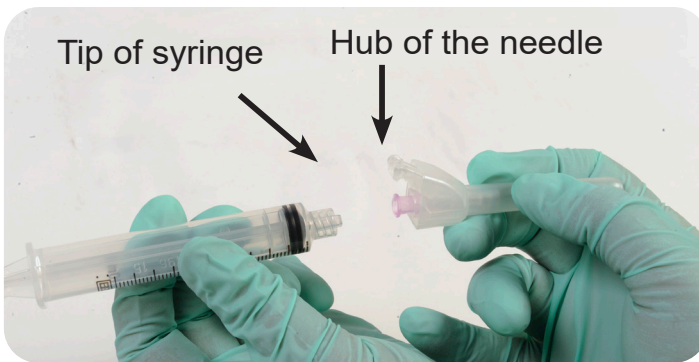


2. Take syringe out of the bag and put the bag to the side. Put the syringe on your paper towel.
3. Take 1 needle package and open it. **Keep the needle in the package** and put the package down on your paper towel.
4. Remove the cap from the end of the syringe. To do this, twist to the left. Set the cap on the paper towel.
5. Attach the needle to the end of the syringe by twisting to the right to put it on. Put the syringe on the paper towel.

Keeping the syringe clean

If anything touches the tip of the syringe:

- It is dirty and you should not use it.
- Put the cap back on the syringe and put it in the chemotherapy sharps container.
- Get a new syringe, and start again (page 1, step 1). Remember to wait 20 to 30 minutes for the syringe to warm to room temperature.
- Call your cancer centre pharmacy as soon as you can during working hours to get another dose.

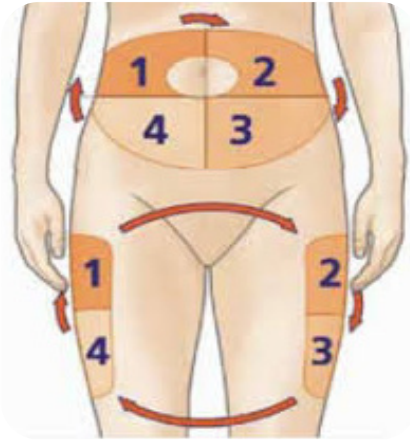


If anything touches the tip of the hub of the needle:

- It is dirty and you should not use it.
- Put it in the chemotherapy sharps container. Get a new needle, and go to page 4, step 3.

Choosing your injection site

1. Find a site for the injection on your abdomen or leg. Avoid areas that are:



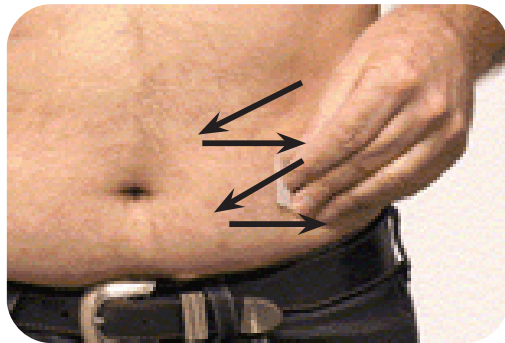
- Bruised
- Hard
- Tender or red
- Scarred or have stretch marks
- In the belly button area

Preparing your injection site

Clean the injection site with an alcohol swab.

1. Use a zigzag motion starting at the site and moving out to a 10 cm (4 inch) area.

Remember to wear gloves and goggles.



<http://www.nps.org.au/>

2. Let the area air dry.
3. Do not let anything touch the area after you have cleaned it.

Try to use a different area every time you inject.

Injecting the dose

1. Take the cap off the needle. Your nurse will show you how to do this safely. Hold the syringe in the hand you will use to inject yourself.
2. Use the other hand to pinch a wide fold of skin in the area you cleaned with alcohol.



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3. Hold the syringe the way you would a pencil or a dart and insert the needle straight (90 degree angle) into the area you are injecting.
4. Make sure the air bubble you see in the syringe moves to the end of syringe by the plunger. Your nurse will show you how to do this. **Do not** push the air out of the syringe.



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5. After the entire needle is in, let go of the skin.
 6. Slowly push down on the plunger all the way until the syringe is empty, including the little bit of air at the end. This will help prevent the drug leaking onto your skin.
 7. Pull the needle out of the skin and put a piece of gauze on the injection site. Apply pressure for 5–10 minutes. **Do not** rub the site.
 8. **Do not** replace the cap on the needle. Put the safety cover on the needle (like your nurse showed you).
 9. Put the entire syringe in the chemotherapy sharps container.



10. Keep your goggles. You will need these every time you do your injections. You can throw all other supplies in the chemotherapy sharps container, including your used paper towel, gauze, gloves, alcohol swabs, syringe cap, needle and syringe bag.
11. Clean your goggles with soap and water.
12. Wash your hands with soap and water.

If you have a spill, follow the 'cleaning up spills' section in your Systemic Treatment booklet.

How to handle chemotherapy spills

The spill came in contact with:	What you can do:
Your eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash your eyes under running water for at least 10–15 minutes.• Keep your eyes open when you do this.• Get medical attention right away.
Your skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash the area with soap and running water for at least 10–15 minutes.• Report the spill to your doctor or nurse.
Your clothes or linens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear disposable gloves• Wash your hands with soap and water after removing your gloves• Wash them separately from other clothes and linens• Wash through 2 complete washing cycles before you wear or use them again.
Any surface (for example, floors and tables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear disposable gloves.• If it's a liquid, absorb the spill using paper towel before wiping up.• Wash the area well with soap and water 3 times.• Put all the materials in a bag and double bag. Tie tightly.
Paper materials (for example Kleenex®, books, magazines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you spill medicine on paper items you cannot clean, add them to the bag of garbage.

Disposing the chemotherapy sharps container and spill kit

When should I dispose of my chemotherapy sharps container?

1. When the container is 2/3 full. Ask the nurses at your cancer centre for another kit.
2. At the end of your treatment.



When should I dispose of my chemotherapy spill kit?

1. If you have to use the spill kit. Ask the nurses at your cancer centre for another kit.
2. At the end of your treatment.

Where do I bring my chemotherapy sharps container or spill kit?

You can bring the sharps container or spill kit to your cancer centre's pharmacy. Make sure that they are closed tightly.

What do I do with the syringes I didn't use?

Return syringes you did not use to the cancer centre pharmacy. **Do not** put unused syringes into the chemotherapy sharps container.

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The information is to be updated every 3 years, or as new clinical evidence emerges. If there are any concerns or updates with this information, please email cancerpatienteducation@ahs.ca.

Important things to remember:



- Wash your hands before and after your injection



- Wear your goggles and gloves when injecting



- Make sure you have all the supplies needed



- Call if you have any issues or questions

For other Cancer Care Alberta resources,
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