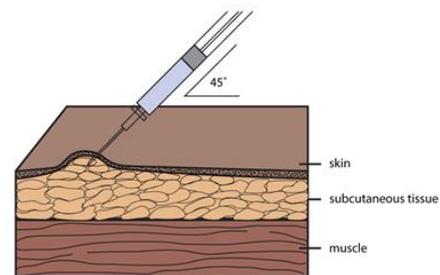


Giving yourself a subcutaneous injection - SubQ

A subcutaneous injection (SubQ), delivers medication into the subcutaneous layer of tissue that is directly under the skin. Medication delivered this way is more slowly absorbed into the bloodstream than medication that is directly injected into the muscle.

Needle for SubQ injections are usually 25-26 Gauge and 5/8" (inch) in length. Medication should never be drawn up through these needles. Use a separate larger drawing up needle since the medicine is in an oil base and it will take a long time for you to draw it up with the small needle. *The larger the needle the lower the number. ie a 19 gauge needle is larger than a 25 gauge needle.*



1: Setting up for the injection

- Find a comfortable, well lit working place and inject at the same time of day each time.
- Clean your work area and assemble supplies
 - Medication in a vial
 - Disposable syringe and two needles—one 18 G needle (to draw up medication.. may be a slightly smaller needle but needs to be thicker than the one to give the injection) and one subcutaneous injection needle (25 -26 G; 5/8 inch)
 - Alcohol swabs, two (one for vial, one for skin)
 - Puncture proof needle/sharps disposal container
- Check the expiration date on the medication vial. Do not use a medication with visible particles, medication that is discolored, or is expired.
- Wash your hands. Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent infection.

2. Preparing the injection dose

- Take the cap off the vial.
- Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab, and then allow it to air dry.
- Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use the syringe.
- Pull the 18 G (larger) 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 medication that your provider prescribed.

Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.

- Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle. (figure 1)
- Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial.



(figure 1)

- Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down.
- Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle.

- Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your provider ordered. (figure 2) This will take a few seconds because the med is thick.



(figure 2)



(figure 3)

- 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 without removing the needle from the bottle. (figure 3) (note: the air isn't harmful if you inject it, but you will have less medicine in the syringe if there are air bubbles).

- After air bubbles are gone, pull the plunger back to the number (mL or cc) marking on the syringe that matches your dose.
- Pull the syringe with needle out of the bottle, remove the 18 G needle (discarding it into the sharps container, without recapping it), and place the smaller subcutaneous injection needle securely on the syringe. Remove the protective cap from the injecting needle
- Check to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is VERY important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your provider (figure 4)



(figure 4)

3. Selecting and Preparing the Injection site

There are several places you can give yourself a subcutaneous injection, including the sides or backs of your arms, the fronts of your thighs, or your abdomen. Wherever you choose to inject, you should be able to firmly grasp the skin and pinch it up into approximately a 1-inch fold.

If you choose to inject yourself in the abdomen, avoid the belly button or any bony areas.



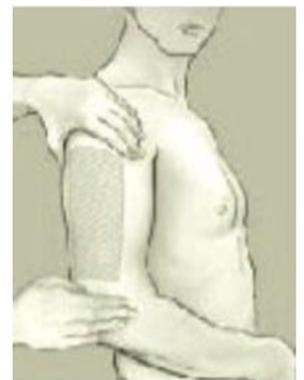
Injection Site on the abdomen



Injection Site on the back of the arms



Injection Site on the thighs



Injection Site on the side of the arm

4. Give the Injection

- Make certain your hands are clean.
- Clean the injection site skin with an alcohol swab; let the skin air dry.
- Hold the prepared syringe with the hand you will use to give the injection
- With the other hand, pinch a fold of skin. (You will inject into the skin between your fingers).
- With one quick and firm motion, insert the needle either directly into the skin fold at a 90 degree angle, or angle it slightly (45 degrees), if that is easier.
 - After inserting the needle under the skin, lift your hand away that is holding the skin.
 - Push on the plunger to inject the medicine (it may take a few seconds because it is thick and is going through a tiny needle).
 - Wait 5 seconds, and then remove the needle from your skin. Dispose of the syringe and needle properly, using a sharps container.
 - Gently press an alcohol swab on the injection site. Hold pressure on the site until there is no bleeding. You can use a band aid if needed.

Tips for reducing discomfort with injections:

- Never reuse needles
- Use separate drawing up and injecting needles
- Let the skin dry fully from the alcohol wipe before beginning the injection
- Keep the muscles in the injection area warm and relaxed
- Inject medicine that is at room temperature
- Break through the skin quickly with the needle
- Insert the needle straight into the skin, and pull it straight out again without changing direction or wiggling the syringe.

Instructions for proper disposal of “sharps”

- Improper disposal of syringes, needles, and other sharp objects can pose a health risk and damage the environment.
- To dispose of medical sharps, first place them in a sealable, puncture-resistant container. You can purchase a home sharps container from most pharmacies. Alternatively, you can use a plastic container, such as a liquid-detergent bottle or milk jug, sealed with tape, to transport used sharps. Disposal sites will not accept loose needles or sharps in bags or glass containers.

To find out more on Maine laws about disposal of sharps and/or to get a free needle cutter

M-F Personal start up plan

1. Estrogen

estradiol valerate (Delestrogen) 10 mg/ml 20 mg/ml 40mg/ml

estradiol cypionate (Depo-Estradiol) 5mg/ml

Inject 0.____ cc (ml) Sub Q IM for a total dose of _____ mg weekly every 2 wks

2. **Testosterone blocker:** start spironolactone 100 mg tabs: 1 tab by mouth ___ times a day. Don't take your second dose too late in the day or you will be up peeing all night.

3. **Labs:** get electrolytes checked 2 wks after starting spironolactone. There will be an order at _____ lab

4. **Recheck:** We will do a one month check in person by portal by phone

telehealth from our _____ site

We will do a 3 month recheck in person telehealth from our _____ site

F- M Personal start up plan

1. **Testosterone:** *testosterone cypionate* (Depo- Testosterone) 200mg/ml

Inject 0.____ cc (ml) Sub Q IM for a total dose of _____ mg weekly every 2 wks

2. **Recheck:** We will do a one month check in person by portal by phone

telehealth from our _____ site

We will do a 3 month recheck in person telehealth from our _____ site