

Giving a Subcutaneous (SQ) Injection into the fat under the skin

A **subcutaneous** (under-the-skin) injection places medication in the fatty layer just below the skin. This guide covers where to inject, how to measure your dose, the right angle, the shot itself, and safe disposal. Read it all the way through before your first injection — and always follow your prescription label first.

Where to inject

Rotate your sites — the same spot over and over builds scar tissue and can make the medication work less well.

- **Upper arm** — back of the arm, halfway between elbow and shoulder. Easiest with help from another person.
- **Abdomen** — the belly, between the bottom of the ribs and the hip bones. Stay at least **2 inches away from the belly button**.
- **Thigh** — front-to-outer side, between knee and hip.
- **Hip** — the soft, fatty area on the upper outer hip.

Pinch test: at any site, you should be able to gently pinch **1–2 inches** of tissue between your thumb and fingers.

Measuring your dose

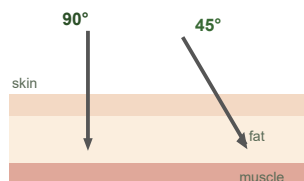
Your label may write the dose in **milliliters (mL)**, in **units**, or both. Match your syringe's markings to your label.

- **Insulin syringe** — a standard 1 mL insulin syringe is marked as 100 units. Best when your dose is written in units.
- **Luer-lock syringe** — a standard 1 mL syringe marked in milliliters. Best when your dose is written in mL.

UNITS	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
Volume (mL)	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.35

Example unit-to-mL conversion. Always confirm your exact dose against your prescription label.

The right angle



90° (straight in) — when you can pinch about **2 inches** of skin.

45° (angled) — when you can only pinch about **1 inch**. Keep the needle's bevel (slanted opening) facing up.

Holding the syringe. For a 90° shot, hold it like a pen between your thumb and first finger. For a 45° shot, rest it between your thumb, index, and second finger with the bevel up.

Giving the shot

1. **Wash your hands** well with soap and dry them completely.
2. **Clean the site** with an alcohol wipe and let it air-dry.
3. **Uncap the needle** — pull the cover straight off, like uncapping a pen.
4. **Gently pinch the skin** with your free hand to lift the fatty tissue.
5. **Insert the needle** at your chosen angle (45° or 90°) with a quick, firm motion of the wrist.
6. **Push the plunger slowly** all the way down, with the needle fully in, until the syringe is empty.
7. **Pull the needle straight out** at the same angle it went in, then release the pinched skin.
8. **Drop the used syringe and needle** straight into a Sharps container (below). Never reuse or share needles or syringes.

Throwing away needles safely

Never put loose needles in the household trash or recycling.

- Use a hard-sided **Sharps container**, available at the pharmacy.
- No container yet? A heavy plastic bottle with a screw-on cap (like a laundry detergent bottle) works until you get one — the needle must not be able to poke through the sides.
- When it's about **three-quarters full**, seal it and follow your local disposal rules.

Not sure how to dispose of sharps in your area? Ask your Village Pharmacy pharmacist, or see [safeneedledisposal.org](https://www.safeneedledisposal.org).

This guide is educational and does not replace your prescription label or your prescriber's instructions, which always take priority. **Always consult with your doctor or pharmacist** before starting, changing, or stopping any medication. Use only the dose, syringe, and needle prescribed for you, and never reuse or share needles or syringes. Stop and contact your prescriber or pharmacist if you have severe pain, swelling, bleeding, signs of infection, or any reaction that concerns you; for a medical emergency, call 911. By using this information you accept that Village Pharmacy & Compounding, its owners, and staff are not liable for any injury, loss, or damage arising from its use.

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