

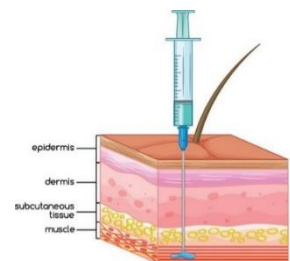
# How to Give Intramuscular Injections

An intramuscular (IM) injection delivers medication directly into your muscles, where it is quickly absorbed. Your healthcare provider will review injection instructions with you. If you have questions, contact your healthcare team **before** attempting to give yourself this injection.

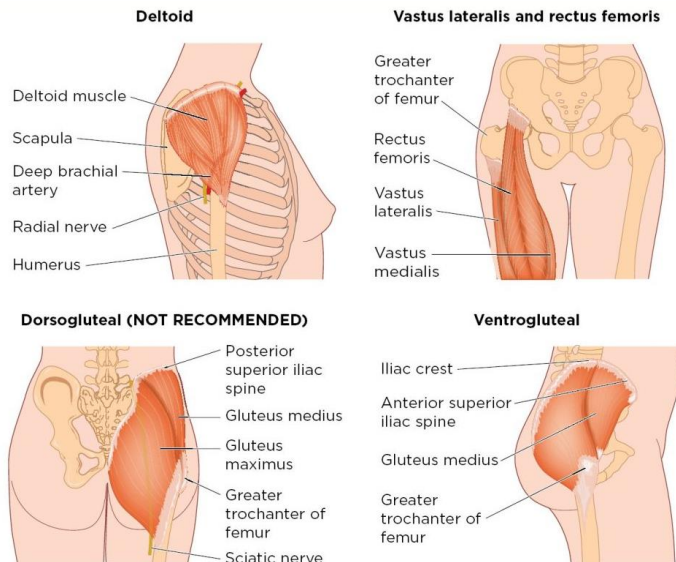
Pick a location from sites your doctor approved. Your nurse will teach you about the body landmarks that help you inject into the muscle and avoid major blood vessels and nerves. Make sure the skin where you will inject is free from infection, cuts, scrapes and pain. **Rotate the sites.** DO NOT use the same area for every injection. See back for IM injection sites.

## How to Give an IM Injection with a Prefilled Syringe

1. Gather supplies. Check the label, date, and any mixing instructions. **If medicine is discolored, cloudy, or has anything floating in it, throw it away and use a new syringe.**
2. Wash your hands thoroughly, and clean your work surface with isopropyl alcohol.
3. Remove the cap, or peel back the paper, and attach the needle to the syringe. **Do not touch the needle.**
4. Clean the site with an alcohol wipe. Begin at the center of the site and move outward. Allowing the skin to dry helps avoid stinging during the injection.
5. Remove the cap. Hold the needle at a 90° angle to the injection site. Gently hold the skin with one hand and quickly insert the needle straight down into your muscle with your other hand.
6. Slightly pull back the plunger. If blood comes up into the syringe, pull the needle out of your skin. Replace the needle with a new, clean one the same size. It is OK to use the medication in the syringe.
7. Inject the medication by pushing slowly on the plunger.
8. Remove the needle and press the site gently with an alcohol pad until any bleeding has stopped.
9. Throw away the used needle and syringe in a container with hard walls like a coffee can with lid. When full, dispose of used syringes properly. Roswell Park has a disposal bin on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the hospital. Or find a location near your Erie County home at: <https://www3.erie.gov/health/needle-access-and-needle-medication-disposal>



## Intramuscular injection sites



Common IM injection sites include:

- **deltoid site** (upper arm)
- **vastus lateralis** (middle of the front of thigh)
- **dorsogluteal site** (upper, outer buttocks) is not usually recommended for self-injection because the sciatic nerve is located here.
- **ventrogluteal site** (side of the thigh, just below tip of hipbone): Often a preferred, safer site (thick muscles, fewer nerves and blood vessels)

## How to Fill the Syringe (if it's not prefilled)

1. Wipe the rubber top of the medicine vial/bottle with an alcohol wipe.
2. Hold the syringe in your hand like a pencil, at eye level, with the needle pointed up.
3. Draw the plunger of the syringe back to the cc or mL marking equal to the amount of medicine you will draw out of the vial later. Example: If you are injecting 3 mL of medication, pull the plunger back to the 3 mL line. (Note: 1 cc is the same as 1 mL.)

4. Push the needle down through the rubber top of the vial, push down on the plunger, and inject the air from the syringe into the vial. (This prevents a vacuum so medicine flows easily.)



5. Turn the vial upside down and hold it up in the air while keeping the needle in the medicine vial. Pull back the plunger to the line on your syringe for your dose. For example, if you need 1 cc of medicine, pull the plunger to the line marked 1 cc on the syringe. (Some syringes may use mL markings.)

6. Check for bubbles. If you find bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your finger until they rise to the top. Then gently push up the plunger to push out the bubbles.



If you have to put the syringe down before using it, put the cap back on the needle **without touching the needle**.

If you have questions, call your clinic. After hours (24/7) you can call Roswell Park at **1-716-845-2300** or toll-free **1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355)** and our Call Center and Nurse Triage staff will assist you.