

# Your Guide to Subcutaneous Chemotherapy Self Injection



Treatment — Systemic Therapy



Alberta Health  
Services

# Table of Contents

- 1** Gather your supplies
- 2** Setting up for your self-injection
- 3** Preparing the injection
- 5** Choosing and preparing your injection site
- 6** Injecting the dose
- 8** How to handle chemotherapy spills
- 9** Disposing of the chemotherapy sharps container and the chemotherapy spill kit
- 10** Contact Information - Alberta Cancer Centres

## Gather your supplies

- Syringes with your dose of chemotherapy
- Chemotherapy gloves (Nitrile)
- Needles
- Alcohol swabs
- Chemotherapy sharps container
- Chemotherapy spill kit and instructions
- Goggles
- Gauze
- Paper towel

# Setting up for your self-injection

1. Take a dose of your medication out of the refrigerator **20 to 30 minutes before** your injection so it can warm to room temperature. Try to give yourself an injection at the same time each day.
2. 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.
3. If the syringe is leaking, do not open the bag. Put the bag in the chemotherapy sharps container and call the Cancer Control 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 (see next page for instructions on proper hand washing).

# How to wash your hands properly



1 Wet your hands



2 Liquid soap



3 Lather and scrub - 20 sec



4 Rinse - 10 sec



5 Dry your hands



6 Turn off tap

## DON'T FORGET TO WASH:

- between your fingers
- under your nails
- the tops of your hands

## Preparing the injection

1. Put the 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 one 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(s). 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.



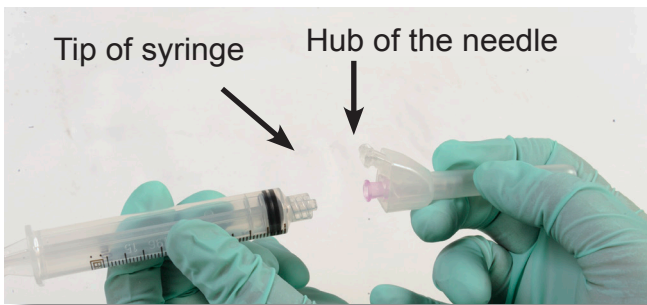
### **If anything touches the tip of the syringe:**

- 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 CancerControl pharmacy as soon as you can during working hours to get another dose.



### **If anything touches the hub of the needle:**

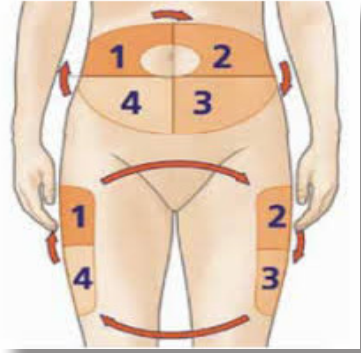
- It is dirty and you should not use it.
- Put it in the chemotherapy sharps container. Get a new needle, and go to page 3, step 3.



# Choosing and preparing your injection site

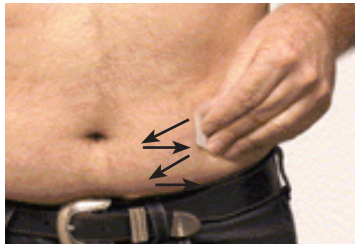
1. Find a site for the injection on your abdomen or leg. Avoid areas that are:

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



2. Clean the injection site with an alcohol swab. Use a zigzag motion starting at the site and moving out to a 10 cm (4 inch) area. Let the area air dry. Do not let anything touch the area after you have cleaned it.

**Try to use a different area every time you inject.**



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

# 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.



## 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 CancerControl pharmacy as soon as you can during working hours to get another dose.

2. Use the other hand to pinch a wide fold of skin in the area you cleaned with alcohol.



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

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. 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.



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

**Do not push the air out of the syringe.**

4. After the entire needle is in, let go of the skin.
5. 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.



[www.phartoonz.com](http://www.phartoonz.com)

6. Pull the needle out of the skin and put a piece of gauze on the injection site. Apply pressure for 5 to 10 minutes. **Do not** rub the site.
7. **Do not** replace the cap on the needle. Put the safety cover on the needle just as your nurse showed you.
8. Throw the entire syringe in the chemotherapy sharps container.





9. Keep your goggles. You will need these everytime 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.
10. Clean your goggles with soap and water.

## How to handle chemotherapy spills:

Use the **Chemotherapy Spill Kit for Home Use** patient information sheet.

<b>Chemotherapy got on or in:</b>	<b>What you can do:</b>
Your eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your eyes under running water for at least 10 to 15 minutes.</li> <li>• Keep your eyes open when you do this.</li> <li>• Get medical attention right away.</li> </ul>
Your skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash the area with soap and running water for at least 10 to 15 minutes.</li> <li>• Report the spill to your doctor or nurse.</li> </ul>
Your clothes or bedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the clothing and wash the skin that was affected.</li> <li>• Wash the affected clothing or bedding separately from other laundry in the washing machine. Do 2 complete cycles before wearing or using them.</li> </ul>

Any surface (for example, floors and tables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the equipment in the spill kit to clean the area.</li> <li>• Follow the spill kit instructions to clean the area.</li> </ul>
Paper materials (for example Kleenex®, books, magazines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you spill medicine on paper items that you cannot clean, add them to the spill kit to return to your cancer centre for disposal.</li> </ul>

## Disposing of the chemotherapy sharps container and chemotherapy spill kit

### When should I dispose of my chemotherapy sharps container?

- Whenever the container is 2/3 full. Contact the nurses at your Cancer Control treatment centre for another kit
- At the end of your treatment



### When should I dispose of my chemotherapy spill kit?

- If you have to use the spill kit. Contact the nurses at your CancerControl treatment centre for another kit
- At the end of your treatment

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

You can return the container or spill kit to your CancerControl pharmacy. Make sure that they are closed tightly.

**I have syringes that I didn't use. What do I do with them?**

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

<b>Contact Information Alberta Cancer Centres:</b>		
<b>Calgary</b>	<p><b>Telephone Triage Nurse</b> 8:00 am – 4:00 pm 403-521-3735 or Toll Free 1-866-238-3735</p> <p>4:00 pm - 8:00 am Call 403-944-1110 and ask for the oncologist on call</p>	
<b>Edmonton</b>	<p><b>Telephone Triage Nurse</b> 8:30am – 4pm 780-432-8919 or Toll Free 1-877-707-4848</p> <p>4:00pm – 8:30am Call HealthLink at 811</p>	
<b>Barrhead</b>	780-305-3304 (7:45am – 4pm)	<b>After hours call: 811</b>
<b>Bonnyville</b>	780-826-6533 (8am – 4pm)	
<b>Camrose</b>	780-679-2822 (8am – 4pm)	
<b>Canmore</b>	7:45am – 4:30pm 403-493-4867	
<b>Drayton Valley</b>	8am – 4pm 780-621-4888	
<b>Drumheller</b>	8am – 3:30pm 403-820-7985	
<b>Fort McMurray</b>	9am – 4pm 780-791-6217	

## Contact Information Alberta Cancer Centres:

<b>Grande Prairie</b>	8am-4pm 780-538-7588	<b>After hours call: 811</b>
<b>High River</b>	8am – 4pm 403-652-0139	
<b>Hinton</b>	8:30am – 4pm 1-877-707-4848	
<b>Lethbridge</b>	8am – 4:15pm 403-388-6800	
<b>Lloydminster</b>	9am – 4pm 306-820-6144	
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	8am – 4pm 403-529-8817	
<b>Peace River</b>	8am – 4pm 780-624-7593	
<b>Red Deer</b>	8:30am – 4:30pm 403-343-4577	

