



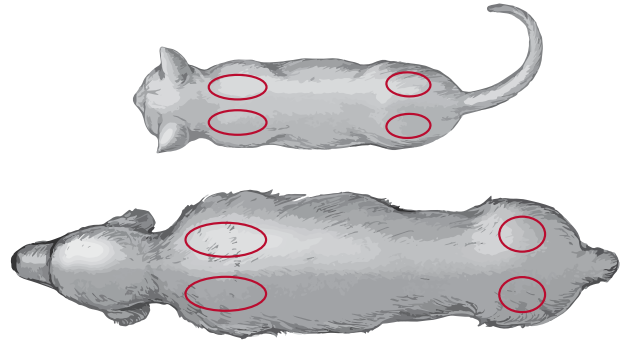
Giving Subcutaneous Injections to Your Pet:

Tips and Information for Administering Injectable Medications to your Pet

Definition

Subcutaneous means “under the skin”. Some medications or fluids will need to be given as an injection under the skin. The best locations to give subcutaneous injections include:

- Skin around the shoulder blades, just to the right or left of the center of the back, or above the shoulder blades around the neck.
- Skin around the back legs, just to the right or left of the center of the back, along the “hips”.



Medication Preparation

1. Remove the plastic (or metal) cover from the medication vial to reveal the rubber stopper on the top of the vial.

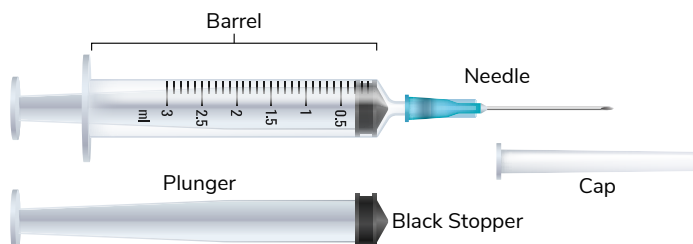
- Wipe off the rubber stopper with an alcohol swab.
- Let the alcohol air-dry before the needle is inserted.

Do not blow on the vial.



2. Connect the needle to the syringe by firmly placing it on the end of the needle (should hear a click sound) or twisting the end of the needle on to the top of the syringe (if using a Luer-lock syringe).

- Once the needle is securely attached to the syringe, carefully take off the cap from the needle.



3. Draw air into the syringe, equal to the volume of liquid needed for your pet's dose.

- Pull back the syringe's plunger until the black stopper reaches the dose amount on the syringe barrel or the 'dose line'. For example, if the dose is 1 mL of medication, pull back the plunger until the stopper is at the 1 mL line etched onto the barrel of the syringe.

4. Place the medication vial, upright, on a flat surface and hold it in one hand. Insert the needle into the rubber stopper on the vial with needle bevel facing up, in order to use the sharpest point of the needle. Then press the plunger down to inject the air into the vial.

5. Keeping the syringe in the vial, turn the vial and syringe upside down.
 - Make sure the tip of the needle is fully covered in the medication (inside the vial).

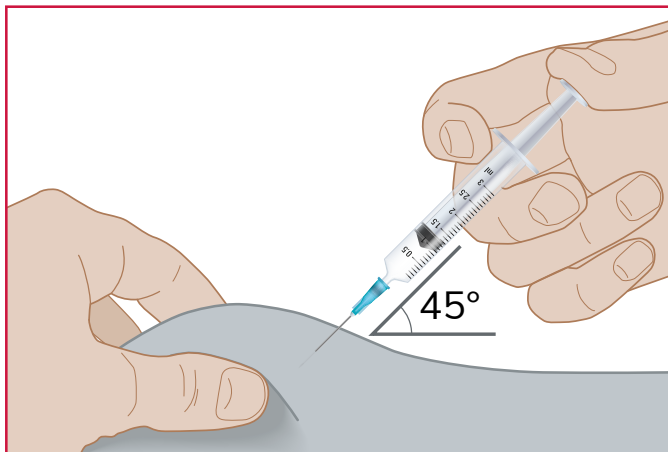
6. Slowly pull the plunger on the syringe down, past the 'dose line', and tap the syringe to remove any bubbles.
 - Tapping on the syringe will allow bubbles to rise to the top of the syringe.

7. Keeping the syringe in the vial, slowly push the plunger up to remove the air from the syringe, until the black stopper is at the 'dose line' on the syringe.
 - Repeat steps 6 and 7 until all of the bubbles are removed.

8. Once the medication is prepared in the syringe, remove the syringe from the vial and place it nearby to be administered.

Medication Administration

1. Make sure your pet is safely restrained; they should be facing away from you when receiving the injection.
2. Find an area of loose skin where you will be injecting the medication.
3. Using your non-dominant hand, gently pinch the skin between your thumb and pointer finger and pull the loose skin upward to form a tent of skin.
 - Look for a small indentation in the center of the skin tent between your fingers. This is where you will insert the needle.
 - Wipe the injection site clean with an alcohol wipe.
4. Insert the needle into the small indentation in the center of the skin tent.
 - Make sure the needle is inserted at a 45° angle to your pet's back. This is to make sure you do not inject the medication into the back muscle.



5. Once the needle is inserted, before injecting the medication, draw back the plunger on the syringe. It should feel like a "vacuum".
 - If you feel the "vacuum" then inject the medication by pushing down on the plunger of the syringe.
 - If you see a flash of red, or if air is drawn into the syringe, remove the syringe and needle by pulling it out of the skin tent and then repeat step 4.
6. When the medication is injected and the syringe is empty, remove the syringe and needle by pulling it out of the skin tent. Properly dispose of the needle and syringe immediately.
7. Make sure to give your pet a nice reward for doing such a great job!

Making Medication Administration Easier

Giving medications to pets can be a very challenging and scary experience. In order to keep both yourself and your pet safe, it is important that you know how to restrain them prior to giving medicine. If you are not familiar with proper restraint techniques, please request our flier, *Keeping Yourself and Your Pet Safe When Giving Medications*.

You should use proper restraint techniques when you give eye drops, ear drops and injections. It may also be necessary when giving pills to your pet. Having a routine prior to giving medicine can make it a more positive experience for your pet, which will eventually make it an easier process.

If you feel uncomfortable injecting medications, do not be afraid to **ask for help!**

If your pet is very FEARFUL or AGGRESSIVE when administering medications, please contact the Ohio State Veterinary Medical Center Behavioral Medicine department for more information at 614-292-4655 or OSUVET.BehaviorMedicine@osu.edu.

Helpful Tips

- Be calm and confident. Acting nervous or making sudden movements may make your pet more anxious about the process.
- If your dog has a history of biting or aggression, it may be necessary to apply a muzzle.
- Having a second person who can hold the animal and give them treats can make it easier for you to focus on giving the medication.
- Refer to our Behavioral Medicine department for great tips and training tricks to help ease this process!

This handout is intended to provide general information.

*If you have **specific questions**, please contact the Ohio State Veterinary Medical Center Pharmacy at 614-292-1010.*