

Preparing and Giving Medicine Using a Subcutaneous Butterfly

Patient/Caregiver Information

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The information in this guide is to help patients and caregivers learn how to draw up and give medicine under the skin using a subcutaneous (SC) butterfly. "Butterfly" refers to the shape of the device. Your nurse will insert the SC butterfly and show you how to prepare and give medicines without needing a needle "poke" every time.

Giving medicines under the skin can be a helpful way to manage symptoms when people are not able to swallow pills or liquids.

Each SC butterfly is meant for only **ONE** medicine but can be used more than once and can stay in place for up to 7 days. If a person needs more than one SC medicine, they will have a SC butterfly site for each medicine. Your nurse will teach you which medicine is useful for each symptom.

You Will Need:

- A clean flat surface
- The medication ampule or vial
- Small syringes
- Needles to draw up medicine
- Plastic syringe caps
- Disposable ampule breaker
- Medication labels
- Alcohol wipe
- Sharps bin, or a puncture-proof container with a lid for used needles and glass



Preparing a Medicine Syringe

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Attach a needle to the syringe by twisting it on in a clockwise motion until secure. Keep the protective cover on until ready to use.
3. To open a **glass ampule**:
 - a. Gently tap, or flick, the top to move all the medicine into the body of the ampule.
 - b. Using an ampule breaker, or a gauze pad, snap the top away from you and place in the sharps bin.
 - c. Remove the needle cover and insert the needle into the bottom of the ampule, so the tip of the needle is in the medicine.
 - d. Draw up the medicine into the syringe by gently pulling back on the plunger until the black part of the plunger is just past the line for your medicine dose.
 - e. Remove and hold the syringe upright. Flick the syringe with your finger to move the air to the top. Gently press the plunger to remove any air from the top of the syringe.
 - f. Slowly advance the plunger until you have the correct amount of medicine in the syringe as taught by your care team.
 - g. Remove the needle and replace it with a plastic cap. Label the syringe with the medicine name and dose.
 - h. Dispose of glass ampule and used needle into the sharps bin.

more information on other side →

Call 8-1-1

Healthlink BC
www.healthlinkbc.ca

Nurse	24 hours a day	Daily
Dietitian	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Mon – Fri
Pharmacist	5 p.m. – 9 a.m.	Daily
Hearing Impaired	Call 7-1-1	

Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse, ask a dietitian about nutrition, or a pharmacist about your medication.

Using a Subcutaneous Butterfly (*continued*)

4. To open a **medicine vial**:

- a. Remove the round plastic cover.
- b. Clean the rubber top with an alcohol wipe for 10 seconds and allow to dry for 30 seconds.
- c. Using a needle, draw air into the syringe. Stop when the black part of the plunger is just at the line for your medicine dose.
- d. Leaving the vial upright on a flat surface, insert the needle into the rubber seal and gently press the plunger to release the air into the vial.
- e. With the needle still in place, turn the vial and syringe upside down and slowly withdraw the medicine into the syringe. Stop when the black part of the plunger is just past the line for your medicine dose.
- f. Remove the needle from the vial. Keeping it upright, flick the syringe with your finger to move the air to the top. Gently press the plunger to push the air bubbles out.
- g. Slowly advance the plunger until you have the correct amount of medicine in the syringe as taught by your care team.
- h. Remove the needle and replace it with a plastic cap. Label the syringe with medicine name and dose.
- i. Place the empty medicine vial and needle into the sharps bin.

Please Note: Some vials contain more than one dose. Draw up as many doses from the vial, each in separate syringes, before putting it in the sharps bin

5. Make sure you have the correct dose of medicine in the syringe as shown by your care team.

Giving Medicine into a SC Butterfly

1. Set your prefilled syringe and an alcohol swab on a clean surface.
2. Check the label on the syringe and make sure the medicine name matches the label on the SC butterfly.
3. Check the butterfly site. Do not use the SC site and call your nursing team if it is:
 - Red
 - Painful
 - Bruised
 - Swollen
 - Leaking
 - Bleeding

4. Open the alcohol swab and use it to clean the endcap on the end of the SC butterfly tubing for 10 seconds. Allow to dry for 30 to 40 seconds.
5. Remove the plastic cap from the syringe being careful not to touch the exposed end.
6. Holding the syringe in one hand and the endcap in the other, gently push and twist the syringe clockwise onto the endcap until it feels secure.
Note: Do NOT use a needle to give medicine into the endcap.
7. Gently and slowly push the plunger to give the medicine. If the medicine does not enter easily, do not force it. Contact your nurse.
8. When the plunger is fully pressed, remove the syringe by gently untwisting it. **Be careful not remove the endcap from the SC butterfly.**
9. Record the date and time the medicine was given on the sheet provided by your care team. Note if the medicine was helpful.

Safely Store and Dispose of Syringes

1. Make sure all syringes are labelled with the medicine name and dose. These must match the label of your storage container (such as a cup). Only one medicine should be kept in each container and these should be stored in a safe place, out of children's reach.
2. Some medicines need to be kept in the fridge or in the dark. Your nurse will let you know if your medicine has special storage needs.
3. You can throw away the empty used syringes in the garbage bin.
4. Take any medicine and pre-filled syringes you no longer need to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

For any questions or concerns please contact your nursing team directly on the numbers provided.

Home Health Nurse contact information:
