

HOW TO...

SUBCUTANEOUS INJECT



Why...

Injecting Subcutaneously (under the skin) is a safe and effective way of administering medicines. There will be a time when you need to do this whether it is a vaccine, a wormer or a vitamin injection.

How...

Subcutaneous injections are given under the skin using a short needle, here's how:

- Pinch a 2-inch fold of skin between your thumb and index finger to form a "tent".
- Insert the needle into the pocket of skin at the bottom of the fold where the loose skin meets the body (the base of the tent) ensuring not to enter the muscle. Draw back on the plunger of the syringe **If you see blood in the solution in the syringe, do not inject** Withdraw the needle and start again at a new site. If you are using a multidose syringe it is difficult to draw back on the plunger so the needle is inserted and the injection is given without checking to see if you hit a blood vessel
- If you don't get any blood back into the syringe proceed with the injection. slowly push the plunger to inject the medication. Press the plunger all the way down.
- Injecting with the needle pointing towards the ground will lessen the likelihood of the drug leaking out of the hole left by the needle.
- Massage the injected area
- Immediately put the syringe and needle into the disposal container

Tips and Rules of Injecting

- Do not inject more than the recommended dose per injection site on the label.
- Space multiple injections in the neck a few inches apart (cattle)
- Inject into a clean site on the animal.
- Use only clean fully sterilised needles
- Do not leave needles in the bottle after use
- Use the right size of needle.
- Consider the use of slapshot tubes
- Discard used needles in a sharps container. A sharps container is where needles, scalpel blades, etc. can be discarded so that they are not mixed with other rubbish.
- If a blood-borne disease is suspected in the flock, a new needle must be used with each animal.
- NEVER use bent, burred, dull or dirty needles or syringes, and never re-straighten bent needles.
- Some medicines must be kept cold or out of the sunlight to remain effective. Bottles should be stored in a fridge (not containing food for human consumption!). Replace in fridge after use.
- If using re-usable needles, ensure they are sterilised directly after use and stored in sterile conditions.

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Species Specific

Sheep/goats

The preferred site for subcutaneous injection in sheep/goats is the skin just behind the elbow (although they can also be given in the triangular area in front of the shoulders between the top and bottom of the shoulder blade and corner of the jaw.) Or given into the inside of the hind leg

The place for injecting is usually written in the dosing instructions of the medication.

Needles should be changed after every animal.

Vaccines often cause swelling.

Cattle

The Preferred site for subcutaneous injection in cattle is the loose skin on the side of the neck, or the front of the shoulder of the animal,

The place for injecting is usually written in the dosing instructions of the medication.

Needles should be changed after each animal injected unless using sterimax equipment.

Do not give injections in the rump (sirloin steaks) or the thigh (round steaks and roasts) since these are expensive cuts of meat and injection site lesions create significant muscle damage, scarring and tough beef

Pigs

The preferred site for subcutaneous injections in pigs is under the loose skin in the hollow, 25-75mm behind and on the level of the base of the ear.

On smaller pigs and piglets, inside the thigh beneath the fold of the skin or, beneath the skin behind the shoulder.

Alpaca

The preferred site for subcutaneous injections in Alpaca is just above the shoulder, you will need to part the hair but you should be able to pinch a large amount of flesh beneath and inject as for other animals.

You Will Need

- Needle(s)
- Syringe/ Dosing Gun
- Medication
- Sterilising Equipment
- Sharps container
- Animal Restraining Equipment

Other Guides in the Series relevant to this article

What Needle?, Intra muscular injections, Restraining and controlling Animals