



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTRAMUSCULAR (IM) SELF-INJECTIONS

**General Things to Keep in Mind:** With lipotropic medications, typically once weekly, any time of day, with or without meals. Rotate injection sites with each dose. Inspect the medication visually before use. It should appear clear and colorless to slightly yellow. Do not use if particulate matter or discoloration is seen. Never co-administer with another medication in the same syringe. It is acceptable to inject an intramuscular and subcutaneous medication in the same body region, but the injections should not be adjacent to one another.

### Step 1: Wash Hands Thoroughly with Soap and Water and Gather Supplies

- The medication vial
- 2 alcohol prep pads
- 1 syringe with a 1 to 1.5 inch 22-25 gauge needle
- Sharps container (Or, if you do not have a sharps container, you can use an empty detergent or bleach container, or a metal coffee can with a lid).

### Step 2: Prepare the Syringe

- Pull the tab on the center of the vial cap to expose the top of the rubber stopper.
- Use an alcohol pad to wipe the top of the vial. This will kill any bacteria on the vial.
- Take the syringe out of its package. Remove the cap from the needle.
- Be very careful not to let anything touch the needle. If anything touches the needle, discard the syringe and needle and use a new one.
- Holding the vial upright and the syringe downward, insert the needle through the circle in the center of the rubber stopper.
- Push the plunger down to inject air into the vial. This is necessary because the vial is pressurized and you must replace the amount of medication you remove with air.
- Turn the vial and syringe upside down.
- Slowly pull the plunger down past your prescribed dose. This will help remove any air bubbles.
- Slowly push the plunger back up to your prescribed dose.
- Check the amount of medication in the syringe to make sure it is the correct dose.
- Tap the side of the syringe to release any air bubbles and push the plunger to the exact dose mark.
- Carefully remove the needle from the vial.

### Step 3: Choose and Clean the Injection Site

- Pick a muscle: Common IM sites for self-injection are:
- Thigh (Vastus Lateralis): Middle third of your outer thigh—easy to reach and see.
- Upper Arm (Deltoid): Back or side of your upper arm (harder to self-inject unless you're flexible).
- Buttocks (Ventrogluteal): Upper outer quadrant (often needs help from someone else).
- Rotate sites: Switch spots each time (e.g., left thigh, right thigh) to avoid irritation.
- Clean the selected injection site: Wipe the skin with an alcohol swab in a circular motion (about 2 inches wide) and let it air dry fully—don't blow on it.

### Step 4: Administer the Injection

- Position yourself: Sit or stand comfortably so you can reach the site easily. Relax the muscle—tense muscles hurt more.
- Hold the syringe: Grip it like a pencil or dart, with the needle pointing down.
- Insert the Needle:
- At a 90-degree angle (straight in), push the needle quickly and smoothly into the muscle—go all the way in (1-1.5 inches for most IM shots).
- Do not hesitate; a fast motion reduces pain.
- Inject the medication.
- Pull back the plunger slightly. If blood enters the syringe, you have hit a vein; remove and start over with a new needle.
- If no blood, push the plunger slowly and steadily to deliver the dose (takes a few seconds).
- Remove the needle: Pull it out at the same 90-degree angle, quickly but gently. Do not rub the site—press with a cotton ball or gauze if it bleeds a little.