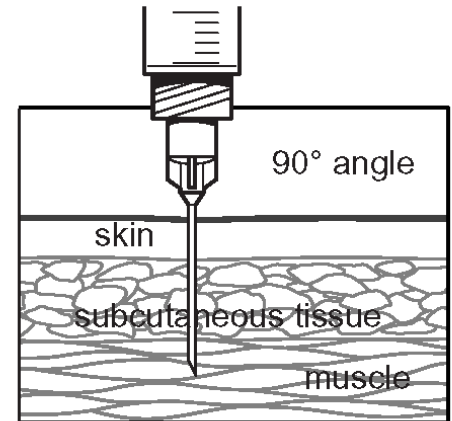


# How to Give a Testosterone Intramuscular (IM) Injection

## What is an intramuscular injection?

An intramuscular (IM) injection, (illustration on right) delivers medication deep into the muscle tissue. This allows the medication to be quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. Intramuscular shots are given at a 90-degree angle. The needle for IM injections can be 22-23 Gauge, 1-1.5 inches in length, adjusted for thickness of site.



Adapted from  
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3084.pdf> on  
3/16/2013. We thank the Immunization Action  
Coalition.

## Step 1: Setting up for the injection

Find a comfortable, well-lit working place and inject at the same time each day.

1. Clean your work area.
2. Remove medication from the refrigerator and let it reach room temperature.
3. Make sure it is the medication your doctor prescribed. Check the expiration date on the vial. Do not use a medication with particles, medication that is discolored, or is expired. Wash your hands. Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent infection.

## Assemble your supplies, which include:

1. Medication in a vial
2. Disposable syringe and needles, one 18 G needle to draw up medication then switch to injection needle (22-23 G; 1-1.5 inch)
3. Alcohol swabs
4. Puncture proof disposal container



A syringe with a needle and a vial  
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## Step 2: Selecting and preparing the injection site

### Vastus lateralis muscle in the thigh:

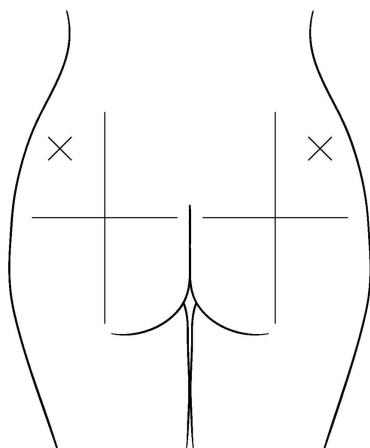
Choose this site if are injecting yourself, or if a caregiver gives you the injection. Look at your thigh and divide it horizontally into 3 equal parts. The injection will go in the outer middle third. The thigh is a good place to give yourself an injection because it is easy to see.



The picture on the left shows the position for self-injection.

When another person is giving the injection (pictured below), the injection location does not change.

Form a V with your fingers by separating your first finger from the other 3 fingers. Place the heel of your hand on the bone (femur) that ends before the knee bends and aim the injection right above the V in the center of the thigh.



### Gluteus maximus muscle in the buttocks:

You may choose this site only if a caregiver gives you the injection. To find the correct location for injecting into the gluteus maximus muscle, expose the buttocks and divide (in your mind) each buttock into four parts. Aim the injection into the upper quarter of the buttock (X on the diagram), towards the hip bone portion.

### Step 3: Preparing the injection dose

1. Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab. Allow to dry.
2. Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use that syringe.
3. Pull the 18 G needle cover straight off the syringe. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose that your doctor prescribed. Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.
4. Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper. Do not put the needle through the rubber stopper more than once.
5. Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial.



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6. Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down. Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle.

7. Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your doctor ordered.



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8. Keeping the needle in the vial, check for air bubbles in the syringe. If there are air bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Then slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe without removing the needle from the bottle.



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9. After air bubbles are gone, pull the plunger back to the number (mL or cc) marking on the syringe that matches your dose. Remove the 18 G needle and replace it with the IM needle.
10. Check to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is **very** important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your doctor.
11. **Do not lay they syringe down** or let the needle touch anything.

#### **Step 4: Give the injection**

1. Clean the injection site skin with an alcohol swab; let it air dry.
2. Hold the skin around the injection site in the manner described above.
3. Insert the IM needle into the muscle at a 90-degree angle with one quick and firm motion.
4. After inserting the needle into the muscle take your hand off the skin. You may feel some burning or pressure as the medicine enters your muscle.
5. When you finish injecting the full dose of the medication into the muscle, remove the needle.

6. Gently press an alcohol swab on the injection site. Hold pressure on site until there is no bleeding. You can place a band aid on injection site if needed.

### **Tips for reducing injection pain**

- Inject medicine that is at room temperature.
- Remove all air bubbles from the syringe before injection.
- Let the skin dry after using alcohol wipes before injecting.
- Keep the muscles in the injection area relaxed.
- Break through the skin quickly with the needle.
- Don't change the direction of the needle as it goes in or comes out.
- Do not reuse disposable needles.

### **Instructions for disposing of “sharps”:**

Improper disposal of syringes and other sharp objects can pose a health risk and damage the environment. Most counties in Michigan offer residents a safe needle disposal program through county solid waste divisions in each county.

- To find out if your county has a program, please visit:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/whm-stsw-sharps-collection-list\\_196524\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/whm-stsw-sharps-collection-list_196524_7.pdf).
- For information on how to store and dispose of used needles visit:  
<http://www.safeneedledisposal.org/>

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