

How to Administer IM and SC Injections to Adults

Intramuscular (IM) Injections

Administer these vaccines via IM route:

Tetanus, diphtheria (Td), or with pertussis (Tdap); hepatitis A; hepatitis B; human papillomavirus (HPV); trivalent inactivated influenza (TIV); and meningococcal conjugate (MCV4). Administer polio (IPV) and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) either IM or SC.

Injection site:

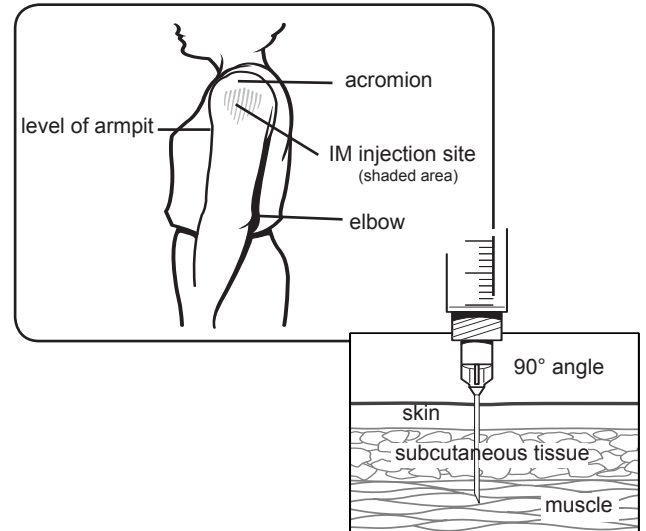
Give in the central and thickest portion of the deltoid—above the level of the armpit and below the acromion (see the diagram).

Needle size:

22–25 gauge, 1–1½” needle

Needle insertion:

- Use a needle long enough to reach deep into the muscle.
- Insert the needle at a 90° angle to the skin with a quick thrust.
- Separate two injections given in the same deltoid muscle by a minimum of 1”.



Subcutaneous (SC) Injections

Administer these vaccines via SC route:

MMR, varicella, meningococcal polysaccharide (MPSV4), and zoster (shingles). Administer polio (IPV) and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) either SC or IM.

Injection site:

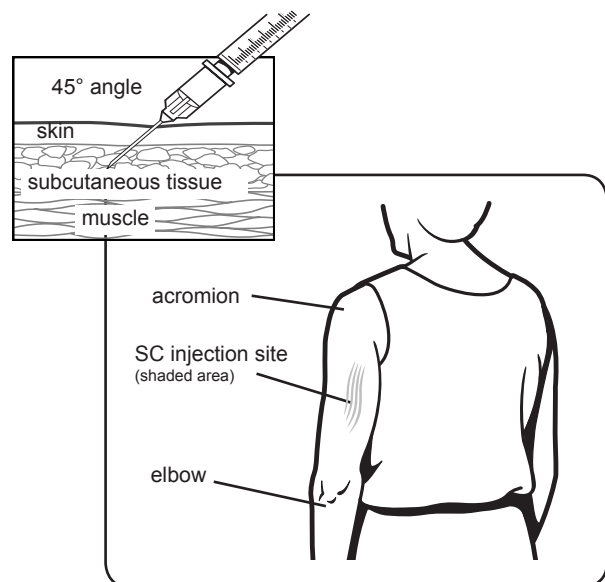
Give in fatty tissue over the triceps (see the diagram).

Needle size:

23–25 gauge, 5/8” needle

Needle insertion:

- Pinch up on the tissue to prevent injection into the muscle. Insert the needle at a 45° angle to the skin.
- Separate two injections given in the same area of fatty tissue by a minimum of 1”.



Adapted by the Immunization Action Coalition, courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Health