How to Administer Intramuscular (IM) Vaccine Injections

Administer these vaccines by the intramuscular (IM) route: diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTaP, Tdap); diphtheria-tetanus (DT, Td); *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib); hepatitis A (HepA); hepatitis B (HepB); human papillomavirus (HPV); inactivated influenza (TIV); quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate (MCV4); and pneumococcal conjugate (PCV). Administer inactivated polio (IPV) and pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV23) either IM or SC.

Patient age	Injection site	Needle size
Newborn (0–28 days)	Anterolateral thigh muscle	⅝"* (22–25 gauge)
Infant (1–12 months)	Anterolateral thigh muscle	1"* (22–25 gauge)
Toddler (1–2 years)	Anterolateral thigh muscle	1–1¼" (22–25 gauge)
	Alternate site: Deltoid muscle of arm if muscle mass is adequate	⅝–1"* (22–25 gauge)
Children (3–18 years)	Deltoid muscle (upper arm)	⅝–1"* (22–25 gauge)
	Alternate site: Anterolateral thigh muscle	1–1¼" (22–25 gauge)
Adults 19 years and older	Deltoid muscle (upper arm)	1–1½"*† (22–25 gauge)
	Alternate site: Anterolateral thigh muscle	1–1½" (22–25 gauge)

*A ⅝" needle usually is adequate for neonates (first 28 days of life), preterm infants, and children ages 1 through 18 years if the skin is stretched flat between the thumb and forefinger and the needle is inserted at a 90° angle to the skin.

†A ⅝" needle is sufficent in adults weighing less than 130 lbs (<60 kg) if the subcutaneous tissue is not bunched and the injection is made at a 90-degree angle; a 1" needle is sufficient in adults weighing 130–152 lbs (60–70 kg); a 1–1½" needle is recommended in women weighing 152–200 lbs (70–90 kg) and men weighing 152–260 lbs (70–118 kg); a 1½" needle is recommended in women weighing more than 200 lbs (>90 kg) or men weighing more than 260 lbs (>118 kg).

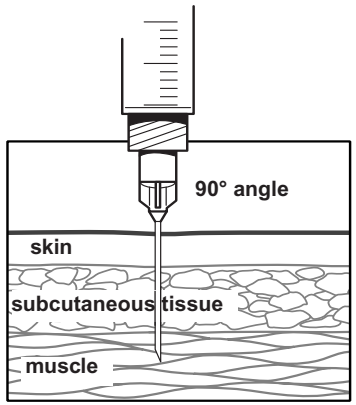
Needle insertion

Use a needle long enough to reach deep into the muscle.

Insert needle at a 90° angle to the skin with a quick thrust.

(Before administering an injection of vaccine, it is not necessary to aspirate, i.e., to pull back on the syringe plunger after needle insertion.¶)

Multiple injections given in the same extremity should be separated by a minimum of 1", if possible.

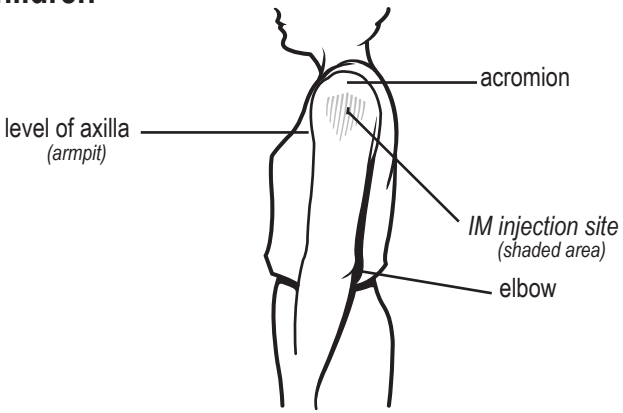


¶CDC. "ACIP General Recommendations on Immunization" at www.immunize.org/acip

IM site for infants and toddlers

Insert needle at a 90° angle into the anterolateral thigh muscle.

IM site for children and adults



Insert needle at a 90° angle into thickest portion of deltoid muscle — above the level of the axilla and below the acromion.

Technical content reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf • Item #P2020 (10/12)

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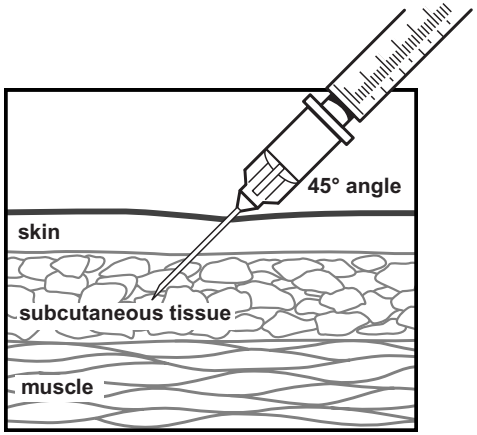
How to Administer Subcutaneous (SC) Vaccine Injections

Administer these vaccines by the subcutaneous (SC) route: measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), varicella (VAR), meningococcal polysaccharide (MPSV4), and zoster (shingles [ZOS]). Administer inactivated polio (IPV) and pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV23) vaccines either SC or IM.

Patient age	Injection site	Needle size	Needle insertion
Birth to 12 mos.	Fatty tissue over the anterolateral thigh muscle	⅝" needle, 23–25 gauge	Pinch up on subcutaneous (SC) tissue to prevent injection into muscle. Insert needle at 45° angle to the skin. (Before administering an injection of vaccine, it is not necessary to aspirate, i.e., to pull back on the syringe plunger after needle insertion.*) Multiple injections given in the same extremity should be separated by a minimum of 1".
12 mos. and older	Fatty tissue over anterolateral thigh or fatty tissue over triceps	⅝" needle, 23–25 gauge	

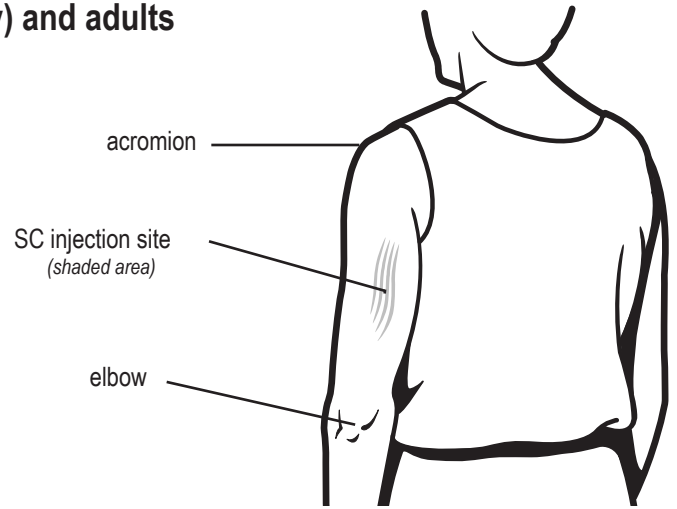
*CDC. "ACIP General Recommendations on Immunization" at www.immunize.org/acip



SC site for infants

Insert needle at a 45° angle into fatty tissue of the anterolateral thigh. Make sure you pinch up on SC tissue to prevent injection into the muscle.

SC site for children (after the 1st birthday) and adults



Insert needle at a 45° angle into the fatty tissue over the triceps muscle. Make sure you pinch up on the SC tissue to prevent injection into the muscle.

Technical content reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf • Item #P2020 (10/12)

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