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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# How to Give an Intramuscular Injection of Leuprolide Acetate (Lupron Depot®)

This information will help you learn how to give an intramuscular injection (shot) using a Lupron Depot prefilled syringe.

An intramuscular injection is an injection that's given into your muscle. A prefilled syringe is a syringe that comes with medication inside.

Your healthcare provider will show you how to give yourself the injection. You can use the information in this resource to remember how to do it at home.

## How to store your prefilled syringes

Store your prefilled syringes at room temperature. Room temperature is 68 to 77 °F (20 to 25 °C).

## How to give yourself the injection

### Clean your hands

Clean your hands well with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- If you're washing your hands with soap and water, wet your hands and apply soap. Rub your hands together well for at least 20 seconds, then rinse. Dry your hands with a paper towel. Use that same towel to turn off the faucet.
- If you're using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, cover your hands with it. Rub them together until they're dry.

## Gather your supplies

Place your supplies on a clean, flat surface, such as a table or countertop. You'll need:

- 1 Lupron Depot package. The package has:
  - A prefilled syringe.
  - A white plunger.
  - An alcohol pad.
- 1 bandage, such as a Band-Aid®.
- 1 small gauze pad or cotton ball.
- Medical gloves, if you want them.
- A container to throw away the used syringe and needle. This should be an empty, hard plastic container with a screw-top lid, such as a laundry detergent bottle.
  - Read *How To Store and Get Rid of Your Home Medical Sharps* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/sharps](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/sharps)) to learn more about choosing a home sharps container.

You may also want an extra alcohol pad. The one that comes in the Lupron Depot package is small.

## Check the prefilled syringe

Check the medication:

- **Name.** Make sure it matches what your healthcare provider prescribed.
- **Dose.** Make sure it matches what your healthcare provider prescribed.
- **Expiration date.** Make sure the expiration date has not passed.
- **Color.** Make sure the liquid in the syringe is clear and colorless. **Do not use it if it looks foamy, discolored, cloudy, or has crystals in it.**

Do not use the syringe if the medication name or dose does not match what

your healthcare provider prescribed, if the medication is expired, or if the liquid is foamy, discolored, cloudy, or has crystals.

If you have another syringe, use that one instead. Then, contact your healthcare provider or pharmacist to tell them. You may be able to bring the full syringe to your pharmacy so they can replace it.

## Get the syringe ready

1. Open the Lupron Depot package. Set the supplies in the package on the table.
2. Screw the white plunger into the end stopper until the stopper starts turning (see Figures 1 and 2).

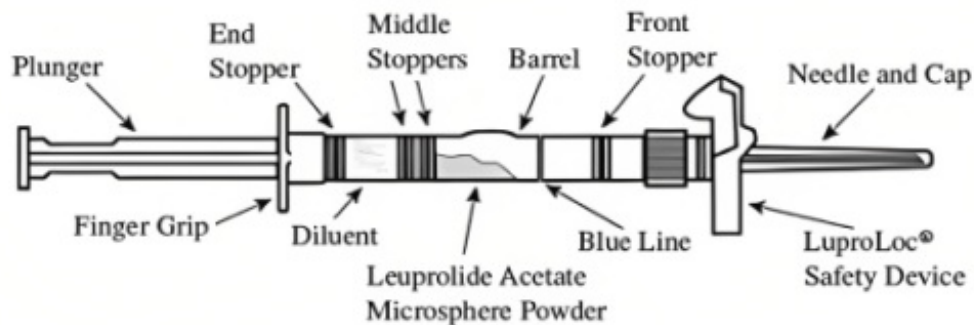


Figure 1. Parts of the syringe

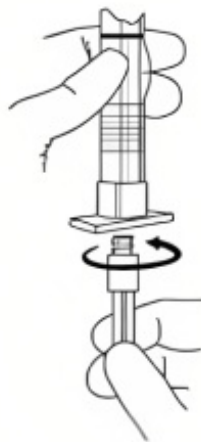


Figure 2. Twisting the plunger into the end stopper

3. Hold the syringe with the needle facing up. Push the plunger in until the middle stoppers touch the **blue line** in the middle of the barrel (Figure 3). You should see the liquid mix with the powder near the syringe's tip.

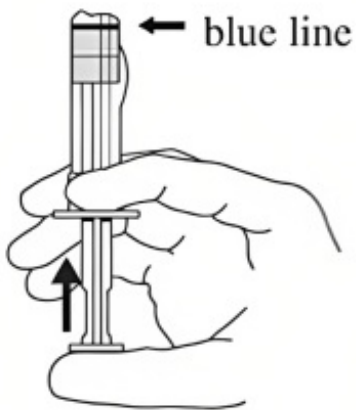


Figure 3. Middle stoppers touching the blue line on the syringe

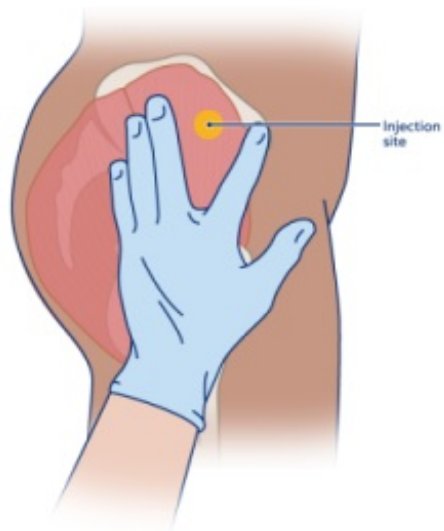
4. Gently roll the syringe between your hands until the powder and liquid are mixed. The medicine should look milky. If you see clumps, or if powder is stuck to the stopper, tap the syringe with your finger. It's important to make sure the powder and liquid are mixed before you use the injection.

## Get the injection site ready

The injection site is the place on your body where you'll get the shot. There are 2 sites you can get the shot:

- Your hip area where your leg and hip bones meet. This is called your ventrogluteal site (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).
- Your upper thigh. This is called the vastus lateralis (see Figure 6).

These areas have thick muscle and not many nerves. This makes them the safest place to give the injection and lowers the risk of nerve damage. You may feel some pain or soreness after the injection. This is normal and expected. If someone is giving you the shot, they should use the ventrogluteal site (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). If you are giving yourself the shot, use the vastus lateralis site (see Figure 6).



Ventrogluteal injection site from side

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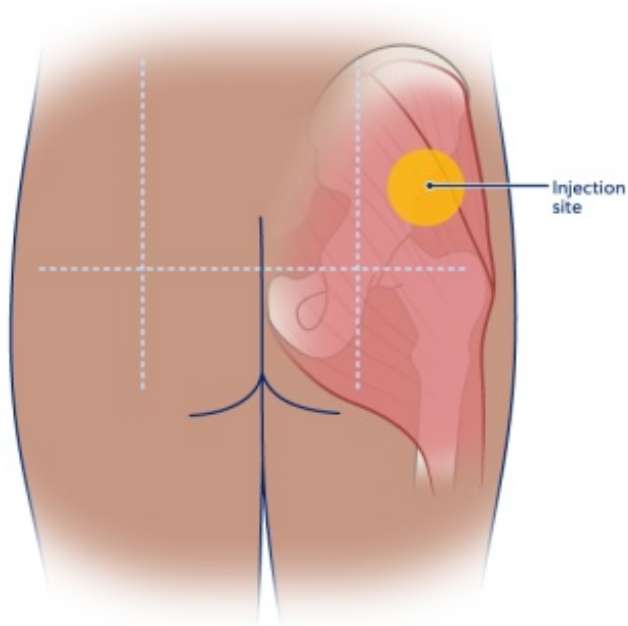


Figure 5. Ventrogluteal injection site from back

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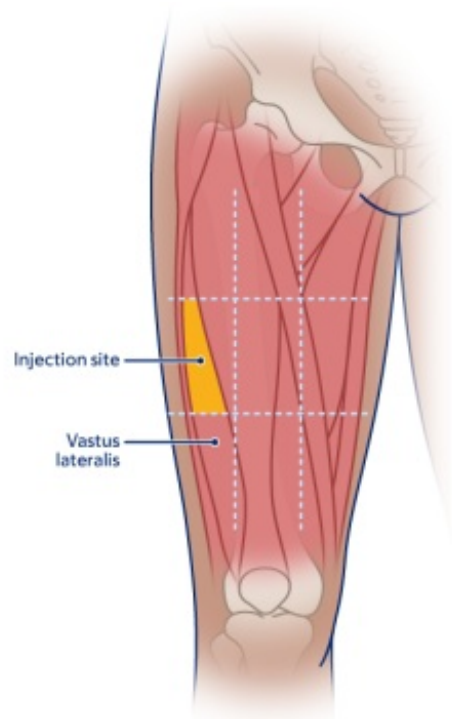


Figure 6. Vastus lateralis injection site

How to give the shot in the ventrogluteal site. The person giving you the shot should follow these steps:

- You can sit, stand, or lie on your back or side.
- Put the heel of their hand where the thigh meets the butt. Their thumb should point to the your groin and their fingers point to your head.
- Move their index (pointer) finger away from the other to make a V shape. They may feel the edge of a bone at the tip of their index finger.
- Give the shot in the middle of the V between their pointer and middle finger (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

How to give yourself the shot in the vastus lateralis site:

- You can sit, stand or lie on your back.
- Look at your thigh and imagine it in 3 equal parts.
- Give the shot in the middle section on the outer side of your thigh, between your hip and knee (see Figure 6).

Before you give the injection, wipe the injection site with the alcohol pad for 15

seconds, then let it dry for 15 seconds.

## Give the injection

1. Hold the syringe with the needle pointing up. Pull the needle cap straight up off the needle without twisting. Drop it in your home sharps container.
2. Keeping the needle pointing up, slowly push in the plunger until you don't see any air in the syringe.
3. Hold the syringe in your dominant hand (the hand you write with). Hold it between your fingers like you would hold a pen or dart.
4. Put the needle straight down into the injection site in a smooth, quick motion.
5. Quickly push the plunger all the way down to inject the medication into your muscle.
6. Pull the syringe straight up out of the injection site.
7. Push the LuproLoc® safety device up toward the needle until it clicks in place (Figure 7). Drop the syringe in your sharps container.
8. If you see blood, hold the cotton ball or gauze pad over the injection site. Press down for a few seconds until it stops bleeding.
9. Put the bandage over the injection site.

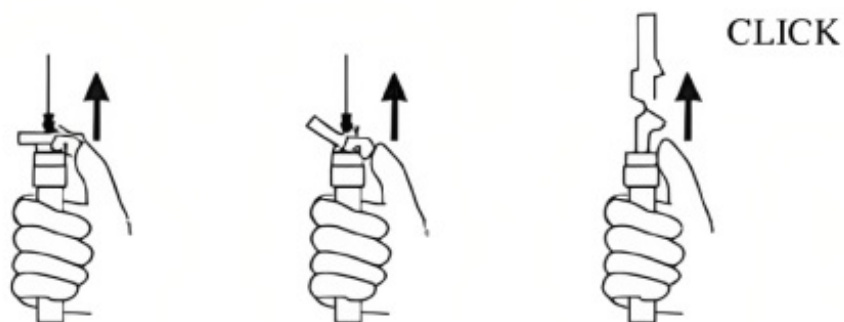


Figure 7. Pushing the LuproLoc safety device into place

# When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if:

- The injection site won't stop bleeding.
- You have very bad pain.
- You have a fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher.
- You have signs of an allergic reaction, such as swelling, redness, itching, or a rash.
- You can't use a syringe because the medication is expired, foamy, discolored, cloudy, or has crystals.
- You can't use a syringe because something touches the needle before the injection.
- You have trouble giving the injection.
- You have any questions or concerns.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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