



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Give Yourself an Injection of Leuprolide Acetate (Eligard®)

This information will help you learn how to give yourself a subcutaneous (SUB-kyoo-TAY-nee-us) injection (shot) with Leuprolide acetate (Eligard). A subcutaneous injection is an injection that's given under your skin.

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 medication

Store your tray packets in your refrigerator until you're ready to give yourself the injection. Make sure your refrigerator's temperature is set between 35 and 46 °F (2 and 7 °C).

Once you take the tray packets out of your refrigerator, you can leave them out at room temperature for up to 8 weeks before you use them. Room temperature is 68 to 77 °F (20 to 25 °C). Do not leave the medication in direct sunlight.

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:

- Syringe A tray packet.
- Syringe B tray packet.
- 1 alcohol pad.
- 1 small gauze pad or cotton ball.
- 1 bandage, such as a Band-Aid®
- 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 plastic laundry detergent bottle.
 - Read *How to Store and Get Rid of Your Home Medical Sharps* (www.mskcc.org/pe/store_get_rid_sharps) for instructions for choosing a sharps container.

Check the medication

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

Before you give yourself the injection, you have to get the syringe ready by following the steps in this section. **Give yourself the injection within 30 minutes of mixing your medication.**

1. Open both tray packets by tearing off the foil from the corners. Take everything out of the packets. Make sure each packet has the supplies you need (see Figure 1). Throw away the silica gel pack(s).

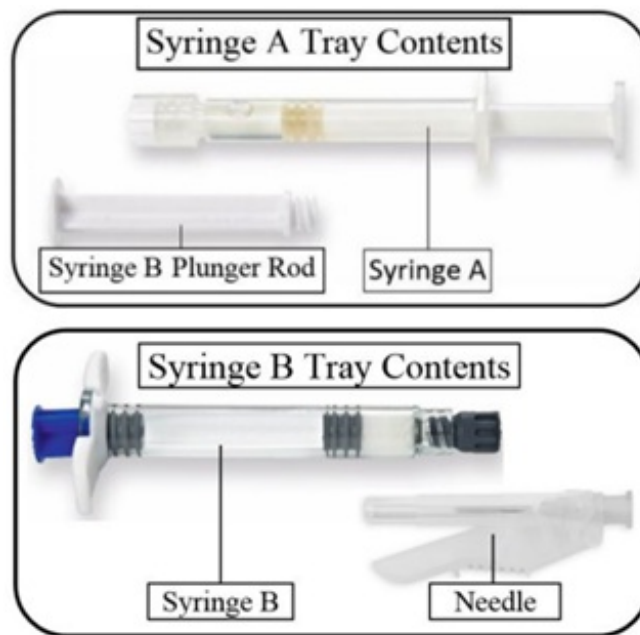


Figure 1. Syringe A and syringe B tray packet supplies

2. Open the safety needle package from the syringe B tray packet by peeling back the paper tab.
3. Pull the short blue plunger out of syringe B without unscrewing it (see Figure 2). Throw the short blue plunger away.



Figure 2. Pull the short blue plunger out of syringe B

4. Gently screw the white syringe B plunger rod into the gray stopper in syringe B (see Figure 3).

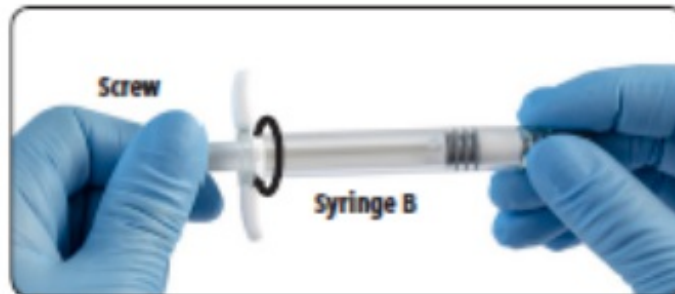


Figure 3. Screw plunger rod into syringe B

5. Unscrew the clear cap from syringe A (see Figure 4). Throw it away.



Figure 4. Unscrew clear cap from syringe A

6. Pull the gray rubber cap off syringe B (see Figure 5). Throw the gray

rubber cap away.



Figure 5. Pull the gray rubber cap off syringe B

7. Place syringe A into syringe B. Gently screw them together (see Figure 6).

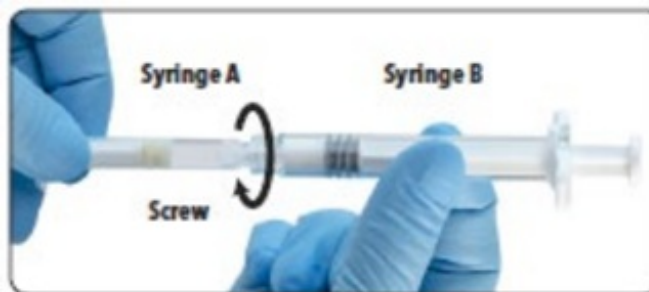


Figure 6. Gently screw syringe A into syringe B

8. Push the plunger on syringe A to put the liquid from syringe A into the powder in syringe B (see Figure 7). Mix the liquid and powder by pushing them back and forth between syringes. Do this by pushing the plungers down on each end, one at a time, for about 45 seconds.
 - When the liquid and powder are fully mixed, they will look colorless, tan, or yellow, depending on your medication dose.

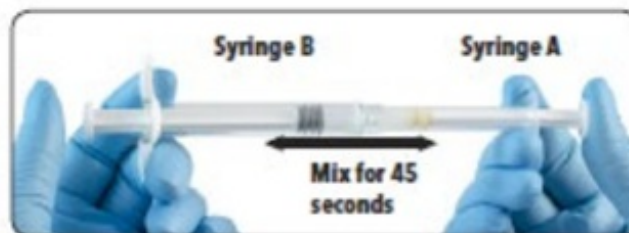


Figure 7. Mix the liquid from syringe A with the powder from syringe B

9. After mixing, hold the syringe upright with syringe B (the short, wide syringe) on the bottom and syringe A at the top. Keep the syringes screwed together. Push the plunger on syringe A to move the medicine into syringe B (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Hold the syringes upright and push the plunger on syringe A

10. Unscrew syringe A (see Figure 9). You may see some small air bubbles in the liquid. This is normal.



Figure 9. Unscrew syringe A

11. Keep holding syringe B upright with the open end at the top. Screw the safety needle from the syringe B tray packet onto syringe B (see Figure 10). Gently twist it clockwise (to the right) until the needle is secure. **Do not tighten the needle too much. This could damage the connection between the needle and the syringe.**



Figure 10. Screw the needle into syringe B

12. Move the needle guard away from the needle (see Figure 11). Pull off the clear needle cover right before giving yourself the injection.

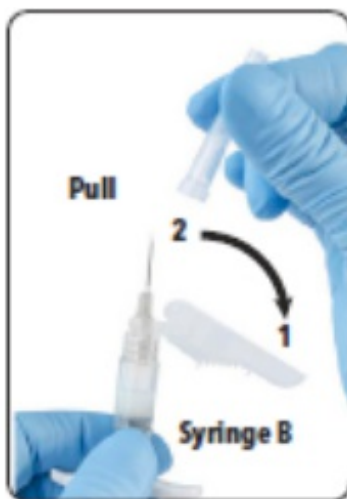


Figure 11. Move the needle guard and pull off the cover

Get the injection site ready

The injection site is the place on your body where you'll give the injection. Choose an injection site where you can pinch a 1 to 2-inch (2.5 to 5-centimeter) fold of skin. It's best to use one of the following areas (see Figure 12):

- Your abdomen (belly), except for the 2-inch (5-centimeter) area around your belly button.
- The middle front or middle outside of your thighs.
- The upper area of your buttocks (butt).
- The back part of your upper arms, if someone else is giving you the injection.

If your healthcare provider tells you to use a certain injection site, follow their instructions. **Do not inject into an area that's tender, red, bruised, hard, or that has scars or stretch marks.**

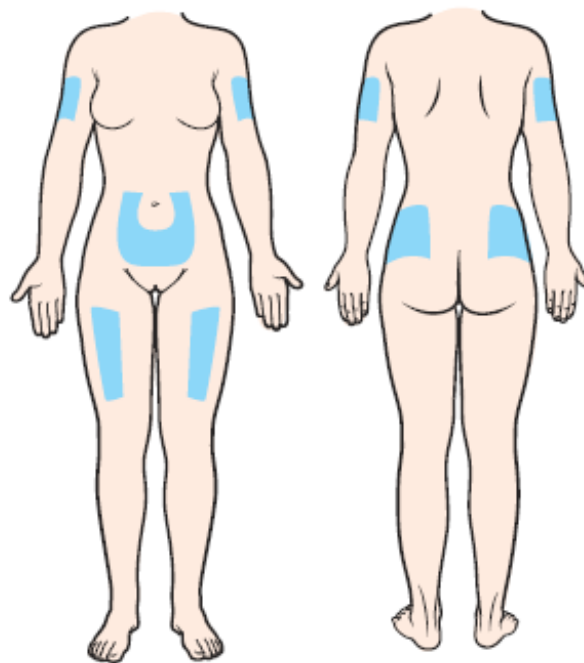


Figure 12. Injection sites

Give the injection in a different area each time. It's helpful to use a notebook or calendar to keep track. Injecting in the same spot each time will make scar tissue form. This can keep the medication from working like it's

supposed to. It will also make it hard to put the needle into your skin.

Once you choose an injection site, wipe it with the alcohol pad for 15 seconds, then let it dry for 15 seconds.

Give yourself the injection

1. Check the syringe for air bubbles.
 - If there is an air bubble, hold the syringe so the needle is pointing up. Gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top, near the needle. Slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out.
2. Hold the syringe around the middle, like a pen or dart. Use your free hand to pinch a fold of skin at the injection site.
3. While pinching your skin, push the whole needle straight down into your skin in one smooth, quick motion (see Figure 13). Do not put your thumb on the plunger yet.

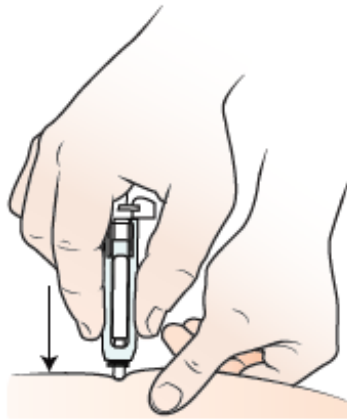


Figure 13. Put the needle into your skin

4. Stop pinching your skin. Use your thumb to slowly push the plunger all the way down to inject all the medication (see Figure 14). You can use whichever thumb is more comfortable.

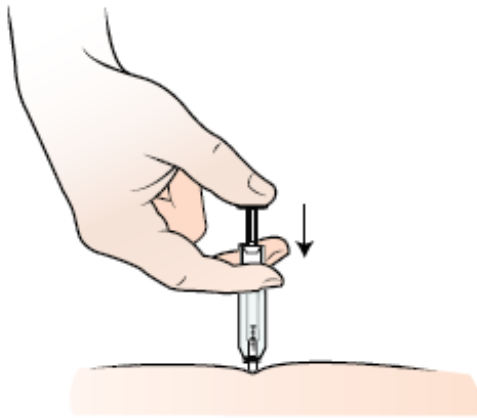


Figure 14. Push the plunger all the way down

5. When the syringe is empty, pull it straight out of your skin.
6. Cover the needle with the needle guard. Do this by using a finger or a flat surface to push the guard until it covers the needle tip and locks into place (Figure 15). Drop the syringe in your sharps container.

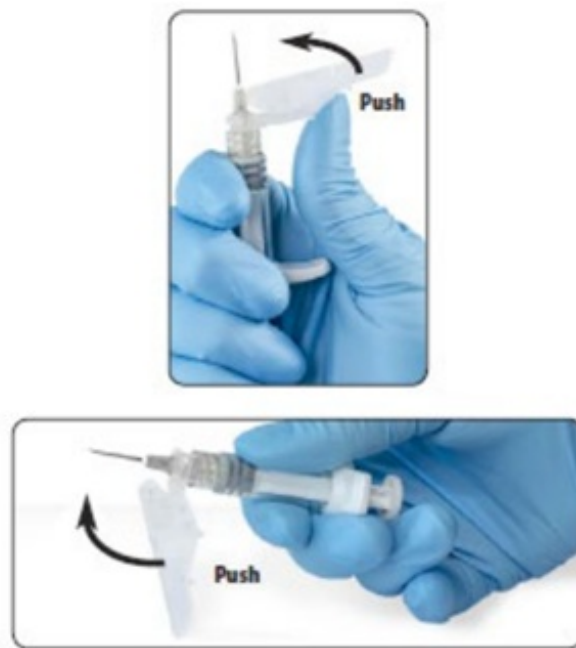


Figure 15: Cover the needle with the needle guard

7. 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.
8. Put the bandage over the injection site.

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 any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

How to Give Yourself an Injection of Leuprolide Acetate (Eligard®) - Last updated on May 4, 2023

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center