



Anakinra

HOW TO GIVE YOURSELF INJECTIONS AT HOME

This handout tells you step-by-step how to give yourself injections of Anakinra medication for your rheumatic illness. You can learn to give yourself injections under your skin (called a subcutaneous injection) once you, your parents and your rheumatologist have decided that you are old enough to do this.

Your rheumatologist or rheumatology nurse will teach you how to give yourself injections. It is important that you ask lots of questions during your training, and make sure you are confident and happy to start giving yourself injections at home. You can keep learning and practising with your nurse until you feel comfortable.

You can change your mind about giving yourself injections at any time during your training or afterwards. This is OK. Your nurse can arrange for your parents to inject the medication.

Once you have learned how to give yourself injections, use this sheet at home to remind yourself of the important steps when you give yourself an injection.

Important things to remember

Use different injection sites

- Change the injection site used each time to avoid soreness at any one site
- Injection sites should be at least 3cm apart, and 5cm from the belly button
- Keep a record of the injection site used each time on the injection site record sheet provided by your rheumatologist or rheumatology nurse.

Give the injection at the same time each day

- You will need to inject Anakinra once every 24 hours
- It should be at the same time each day
- Work out which time will be easiest for you to stick to – for example, don't make it straight after school if sometimes you go out before coming home.

Store anakinra carefully

- Store your Anakinra in its original packet in the refrigerator at 2°C
- Do not freeze or shake the bottle
- If you are travelling, carry medication in a cool bag.

Check the use-by date (expiry date)

- Always check the use-by date on the medication bottle before preparing an injection
- If the use-by-date has passed, do not use that bottle of medication.

Throw out the needle, syringe and bottle carefully

- Never use a syringe more than once and never re-cap a needle
- Put used syringes, needles and bottles in the sharps container straightaway. It helps if you have the container close by when you are giving the injection
- Do not over-fill the sharps container – it should be replaced when it is two thirds full. Put the lid on securely and take it back to the hospital or local council to replace it
- Needle covers, alcohol swabs and cotton balls can be placed in your normal household rubbish bin
- Keep syringes, Anakinra bottles and sharps containers out of reach of children and pets.

Prepare the injection

Set up

1. Find a clean, flat surface to work on, like a table. Clean it really well.
2. Only people who are helping you should be in the room – avoid distractions.
3. Collect the things you need for the injection:
 - two alcohol swabs
 - one cotton ball
 - the bottle of Anakinra
 - one syringe and needle
 - your special needle bin – the sharps disposal container
4. Check the use-by date (expiry date) on the bottle of Anakinra. Don't use the Anakinra if the use-by date has passed.
5. Leave the Anakinra bottle to stand on the table for 60-90 minutes before the injection, so it warms up to room temperature.
6. Do not shake the Anakinra bottle. If the solution looks foamy, let the bottle sit still for few minutes until it clears.
7. Wash and dry your hands really well.

Choosing a place to inject the medication

1. The place you inject medication is called the injection site. Good places to inject medication are:
 - The front of your thighs, half way up
 - Your stomach (except for the area about 5cm around your belly button)
 - The outer area of your upper arm

Places to avoid injecting medication are:

- Places that are sore, red, hard or bruised
 - Places that have scars or stretch marks
 - Places where you can see a vein under your skin.
2. Choose a new site each time you do an injection. If you give it in one spot too often it can get sore.

Getting the injection ready

1. Take the plastic cap off the Anakinra bottle so you can see the rubber stopper.
2. Clean the rubber stopper with one of the fresh alcohol swabs.
3. Remove the syringe from its packet. *Careful: If the packet is ripped or open do not use the syringe or needle. Put it all in the sharps container.
4. Leave the cover on the needle. Pull back the syringe plunger until you reach the mark for the amount of medication you need to inject.
5. Carefully remove the cover from the needle. It helps to twist the cover while you pull it. *Careful: Do not touch the needle or let it touch anything.
3. Hold the Anakinra bottle upright on the flat surface. Push the needle straight through the rubber stopper into the bottle.

6. Push the syringe plunger down to inject air into the bottle. Injecting air makes it easier to pull the Anakinra from the bottle into the syringe.
7. Keep the needle in the rubber stopper, and pick up the bottle. Turn the bottle and syringe upside down so that you are holding the bottle above the syringe. Make sure the tip of the needle is in the Anakinra liquid.
8. Slowly pull back the plunger to draw the medication into the syringe, and fill it up to the right amount.
9. Leave the needle in the bottle and check the syringe for air bubbles. Air bubbles won't hurt you, but they can reduce the amount of medicine in the syringe. To remove any air bubbles:
 - a) Gently tap the syringe until the bubbles rise to the top of the liquid
 - b) Push the plunger to force the bubbles out of the syringe
 - c) Pull the plunger back again to re-fill the syringe to the right dose.
10. Double check with your mum or dad, or someone else who will check carefully, that you have filled the syringe with the right amount of Anakinra.
11. Pull the needle out of the rubber stopper. Hold the syringe in the hand that you will use to inject yourself. *Careful: Do not put the syringe down, or let the needle touch anything.
12. You are now ready to give yourself the injection.

Giving the injection

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position where you can see the injection site easily.
2. Hold the prepared syringe in the hand you will use to inject the Anakinra.
3. Use the other hand to clean the injection site with a fresh alcohol swab. Let the area dry completely because otherwise it might sting when you give the injection.
4. With your free hand, gently pinch a fold of skin at the injection site.
5. Hold the syringe like a pencil.
6. Insert the needle – about 45 degrees away from your skin – and then gently let go of the fold of skin.
7. Look to see if any blood appears in the syringe.
 - a) If no blood appears in the syringe, slowly push the plunger all the way in until all the Anakinra has been pushed out of the syringe.
 - b) If blood appears in the syringe, this means that the needle has gone into a blood vessel. Do not inject the Anakinra.
 - Withdraw the needle and put the syringe and needle – all of it – in your sharps disposal container.
 - Prepare a new injection with a new syringe and needle.
8. When the syringe is empty, pull the needle out of the skin. Be careful to pull the needle out at the same angle it went in.
9. Press the injection site with a cotton ball for a few seconds. Do not use an alcohol swab as this may sting. If it bleeds a bit, cover it with a Band-aid.
10. Put the syringe, needle, and the used Anakinra bottle in your sharps disposal container straightaway.

If you have a problem when you are at home:

- During normal working hours, contact your rheumatologist or rheumatology nurse
- If you need urgent help, contact your local doctor or hospital Emergency Department.

Notes
