

Self-Injection for Vitamin B-12

Why do I need Vitamin B12?

Vitamin B12 is present in most food products and is normally absorbed through the last part of the small intestine. B12 is necessary for proper neurological functioning as well as for the prevention of anemia. Persons who have had surgery to remove this part of the intestine can no longer absorb B12 from dietary sources. In addition, persons who are strict (Vegan) vegetarians may not get enough B12 in their diet. Supplementation with B12 will be needed for both.

Supplies you will need:

Syringe 3cc
Needle 25 gauge 5/8"
Alcohol prep pad
Solution of vitamin B12 (also known as cyanacobalamin)
Puncture proof container (Clorox box, coffee can)



Locate an area.

Find a spot in the kitchen, bathroom, or any room in the house where you will be comfortable giving yourself an injection. The area should have a surface nearby that is flat and even. Clean the surface with soap and water or mild bleach solution. Gather the above materials to the area. Have paper towels handy as B-12 may spill and can stain some surfaces.

Wash your hands and dry well.

This is the most important step in the entire process. Your hands should be clean!

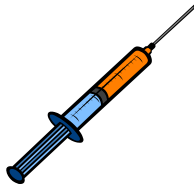
Assemble the needle and syringe unit.

Take the syringe and needle out of their packages. The needle will screw onto the syringe, or you may get a combination unit where the needle is already attached to the syringe.

Choose and prepare the site for injection.

The best areas to use are the fatty part of the arm or thighs. For self-injection, it is easier to use the legs. If someone else is injecting you, the back of the arms is best. Remember you are injecting into the fat, so find a fat spot. Sometimes the abdomen is also used. After you have chosen the site, clean the area with an alcohol swab, using a circular motion to clean the site.

Draw up one (1) cc of medication.



First, (without the medication) pull the plunger back on the syringe to the one (1) cc line. Remove the plastic cap from the medicine vial. Remove the plastic cap from the needle. Insert the needle into the vial and turn the vial and syringe upside down. Slowly push (inject) the 1 cc of air into the vial (this will displace the liquid in the vial when you withdraw the medicine). Carefully draw the fluid back into the syringe to the 1cc line. There may be an air bubble that gets in. If this is the case, pull slightly more than 1 cc back. Lightly tap or flick the syringe to get the air bubble(s) to the top (the end with the needle). Slowly push the plunger up to the 1cc line. Allow excess medication to be released from the needle tip. Tap any liquid accumulation from the needle tip.

Inject medicine.

Not too fast, not too slow...inject the needle into the previously chosen site. Use the base of the wrist as an anchor and use a "dart-throwing" motion. Slowly and steadily inject the entire contents of the syringe. Briskly remove the needle and place soft pressure at the site for a few moments with the alcohol swab.

Discard the supplies.

Place the needle and syringe into a puncture-proof container. Save the container until your next visit to the hospital. Bring it with you and we will dispose of it for you. The rest of the supplies can be thrown away in the trash.

