How to administer a subcutaneous injection

You will need:
• Clean work space to set up for injection
• Bottle of medication
• Sterile disposable needle and syringe
• Sterile needle for drawing medication
• Alcohol swab or tissue
• Sharps container for needle and syringe disposal

Preparing for injection
• Wash your hands with soap and water
• Gather all the items you need
• Check the medication name, expiration date and amount to be given

Filling the syringe
• Take the cap off the medication bottle
• Clean the top of the bottle with an alcohol swab
• Disconnect the syringe from the small needle
• Set small needle aside
• Unwrap the large needle and connect to the syringe
• With the vial upright, put the needle into the rubber stopper and inject air into the vial
• Turn the vial upside down
• Pull back the plunger to beyond the prescribed dose level. Make sure the end of the needle is in the liquid
• “Flick” syringe to remove air bubbles
• Move the plunger to the prescribed dose level on the syringe
  (you may need to pull back and inject repeatedly to clear air bubbles)
• Turn vial upright and remove needle
• Twist off large needle and place in sharps container
• Replace large needle with small needle.

Injection Sites
• A subcutaneous (SQ) injection deposits medication into the fat tissue below the skin
• You can inject into:
  ○ abdomen (except for 1 inch around the belly button) and the upper outer area of thigh
• A caregiver may also inject into:
  ○ Upper outer area of arms
• It is important to change injection site each time
• The new site should be at least 1-2 inches from the last injection site.
Cleaning the injection site:
- Wash the area with soap and water or alcohol swab. Allow skin to dry.

SQ Injection
- Hold the syringe with the needle up and push the plunger just slightly so that you can see a drop of liquid at the end of the needle.
- Pinch your skin and fat tissue with your non-dominant hand
- Hold the syringe in your dominant hand, as if holding a pencil, one inch above the injection site at a 90-degree angle to the skin.
- Quickly dart the needle through the skin into the fat tissue and slowly push down on the plunger to inject the medication OR place the needle tip against the skin and insert gently.
- Pull the needle out. Keep holding your skin until you remove the needle and then let go.
- You may have slight bleeding from the site, this is normal. Rub the area firmly with a cotton ball or tissue after injection to disperse the medication. You may apply a band aid if you desire.

Follow Up
- If you experience redness, swelling or drainage at the injection site, contact your provider.
- All labs should be drawn mid cycle, half way between injections. (for example, if you inject weekly, labs should be drawn 3-4 days after injection)
- Place used drug containers, syringes and needles in Sharps container. Check with your pharmacist for specific disposal instructions or take to a local hazardous waste site

MST Injection Teaching Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_Z0BAmtvhE
Sharps Disposal Information: http://www.stopwaste.org/recycling/residents/household-hazardous-waste/oakland-hhw-facility