

DIG | GUIDE TO THE VEINS

HIGH RISK INJECTING

NECK

There is a big vein in your NECK (the jugular). NEVER inject into this as it is likely you will bleed to death.

FINGERS

Veins in FINGERS are very fine. It can be painful and it is easy to damage them. There are also tiny arteries near the surface, so take care. Remove any rings before injecting, to avoid losing your finger. Use a small barrel with an orange needle, 1/2 or 1ml insulin.

BREAST

Women should avoid the veins in the BREASTS, as there is a high risk of infection.

PENIS

Never inject into your PENIS. The veins won't take a needle, they'll burst and your penis will turn black and swollen before you can even get a shot in.

GROIN

Going in the groin is very dangerous. There is a deep vein in the groin (the femoral vein). The femoral vein is also right next to the main artery that supplies blood to the leg (the femoral artery). It is all too easy to miss the vein and hit the artery. This is a major artery and you could bleed to death or lose a leg by hitting it. As

well as being next to a major artery the femoral vein is also next to a major nerve (the femoral nerve). Hitting this will be extremely painful and could also result in serious damage to your leg. Use a long needle. Most people use a blue 1" needle. Some people can reach it with an orange 5/8". The wider the gauge of the needle the more damage caused. Rotate injection site. Don't keep injecting in the same place.

FEET

There are lots of small veins in your FEET. Inject slowly as it can be painful. Remember to give them a good clean before injecting.

LOW RISK INJECTING

TOP OF ARM

Ok for injecting into muscle. Inject into the shaded area. Use a blue needle.

CROOK OF ARM

Most new drug injectors, use the CROOK of the ARM. This is because it's the easiest place to find a vein and inject. Use an orange needle.

UPPER and LOWER ARMS

Have plenty of visible veins. Rotate sites (change the place where you inject) regularly to give the veins a chance to heal.

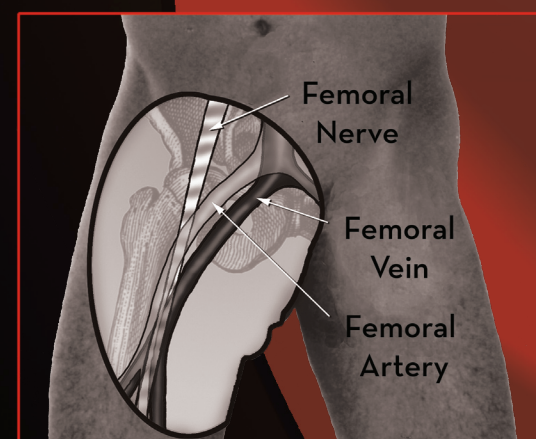
HANDS

There are lots of small veins on the back of your HANDS, use a small barrel with an orange needle, 1/2 or 1ml insulin.

If you are injecting into muscle, **BUTTOCKS** and **THIGHS** or the **TOP OF ARMS** are best. Inject into the shaded area. Use alternate site each time you inject. Green needles for buttock, blue for thigh. Don't use an orange needle to inject into a muscle, as they can snap.

BACK OF LEGS

There are lots of veins in your LEGS. The blood flows slowly in these, so inject slowly.



THE HEART

The heart beats at a steady rate- detectable in the pulse- and when it stops doing this you are (in technical jargon) DEAD. The heart is a highly developed pump. Its job is to make sure blood is circulated around your body- taking oxygen and nutrients to the cells and collecting waste products that are processed by other organs in your body.

THE ARTERIES

The arteries are the tubes leading away from the heart that carry the blood with its oxygen and nutrients. The large arteries go straight to your body's organs and these have a pulse. The large arteries branch off into even smaller ones (known as capillaries). Arterioles (a small branch of an artery) and capillaries do not have a pulse. The blood in an artery is bright red as it contains a lot of oxygen.

NEVER INJECT INTO AN ARTERY

If you inject into an artery you may bleed to death or lose a limb. You will know when you inject into an artery when the plunger is forced back by the pressure of the blood or when you pull the plunger back the blood is frothy and bright red. If this happens, pull out the needle and apply pressure with your thumb for at least 15 minutes. If it does not stop bleeding call for an ambulance or get help.

THE VEINS

The veins take the blood back to the heart. They contain less oxygen so the blood in a vein is a dark red almost purple colour. The veins have a series of valves to stop the blood flowing in the wrong direction. The blood in the veins is pumped back to the heart using the muscles through which the veins pass, so the veins do not have a pulse. Veins look blue and can be seen on the surface of the skin.

DAMAGED VEINS

Damaged veins can be caused by poor or unhygienic technique, using the wrong needle or repeated injection in the same place. Use a new needle for every injection. At the very least, clean your needle and don't use anybody else's. Always clean the injection site, with a swab or soap and water. Don't keep injecting in the same spot. Change arms and veins to try and give them time to heal. Repeated injection will cause you to run out of accessible veins, and this may cause you problems should you require emergency treatment in the future.

NEEDLES

Use the smallest needle possible bearing in mind what you are trying to inject and where you are injecting. An orange needle will cope with surface veins. You don't need to use blue needles in the veins of your arm. There are no benefits and it just causes more damage. Always try to INJECT SLOWLY.