

Your Guide to Subcutaneous Therapy for Cancer



As part of your cancer treatment, your cancer care team may recommend subcutaneous (SC) therapy. Learning more about this type of treatment can help you feel less nervous and more prepared.

What is SC therapy?

Subcutaneous means “under the skin.” SC therapy is when a medicine is given as an injection (shot) just under the skin. Some chemotherapy (chemo) and immunotherapy medicines can be given this way.

What’s the difference between SC therapy and IV therapy?

Some cancer medicines are given through an IV (into a vein). This is called an infusion. Some of these same medicines can also be given as a shot under the skin. Ask your cancer care team how your treatment can be given and which way may be best for you.

How is SC therapy used in cancer care?

SC therapy may be an option if you are getting certain kinds of chemo or immunotherapy medicines. It is another safe and effective way to get the medicine you need. SC therapy may mean:

- Less time spent getting treatment
- More time for your daily activities
- Lower costs for some people

Where do you get SC therapy?

You get SC therapy in a doctor’s office, clinic, or a hospital’s outpatient infusion center.

What happens during SC therapy?

During this treatment:

- A nurse cleans your skin where the shot will be given (often in the belly, thigh, or upper arm).
- The nurse puts a needle under your skin.
- They give the medicine and then remove the needle.
- They put a bandage on the shot area.

You may get more than 1 shot. The number of shots depends on how much medicine you need.



What happens after SC therapy?

You may stay for a short time after the shot(s). How long depends on the type of medicine you get. A nurse will watch you for any problems, such as bleeding or an allergic reaction. It is common to have redness, itching, swelling, or soreness where the shot was given.

Before you leave, your cancer care team will tell you what to do at home. They will also tell you what symptoms to watch for and who to call if you have questions or concerns.



Questions to ask your cancer care team

Asking these questions can help you understand your options and feel more confident about your care.

- Is my cancer treatment available as a shot under the skin?
- Do you recommend a shot or an IV for my treatment?
- Why do you recommend one option over the other?
- How often will I come in for the shot(s)?
- How many shots will I get at each visit?
- Where will I get the shot(s) on my body?
- How long will the shot(s) take?
- What will it feel like during the shot(s)?
- How long will my whole visit take?
- How long will I need to stay after the shot(s) so you can watch me?
- Can I drive myself home after?
- What symptoms are normal after the shot(s)?
- What can I do to feel better?
- What symptoms should I call my cancer care team about right away?



To learn more about different treatments for cancer, visit the American Cancer Society website at [cancer.org/treatmenttypes](https://www.cancer.org/treatmenttypes) or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.