

## **Subcutaneous heparin injection**

When you receive an operation, especially in the case of interventions on the lower limb, mobility is impaired for a while. This slowing of body movements also causes a slowing of the circulation that may give rise to phlebitis or the consequences of phlebitis, such as thrombosis or embolism. For all these reasons, you have been prescribed a drug that can prevent these problems.

It is called heparin, It is to be taken through a small subcutaneous puncture once a day (or two, depending on what is written in your discharge letter).

It's very important to decide an hour and respect it for the following days, because it ensures a steady quantity of drug in the blood that avoid uncovered periods or dangerous accumulations.

To make it easier, I'm explaining you how to do the injection at home. Let somebody help you, if possible; if nobody can help you, you can do it by yourself.

Let's see how.

First of all, wash your hands carefully, to prevent bad infections in the injection place.

Then, prepare this things:

- A syringe pre-filled with the right prescribed drug dose, that has to be removed from the packaging (there is a small air bubble inside: don't remove it, absolutely!)

- A cotton wad (you can use the normal wadding you find in chemist's and supermarket)
- Disinfectant (the one you keep at home, nothing particular is required)
- A waste bin, better if rigid.

Now, you have to decide where to practice the injection. As the drug has to be injected in the subcutaneous tissue, that is in the fat band we have under the skin, better if you decide for the part of the body on the tummy between the hips and the bellybutton. In this picture you can see the best places to use. Anyway, I advice you to prefer the belly because there is much subcutaneous fat and there is a larger place to use.

When you have decided the place to practice the injection, you have to disinfect carefully the place with a cotton wad soaked in disinfectant.

Now you must hold the syringe: remove the cap paying attention not to touch the needle. The needle is very short and thin: this size prevent it to reach the muscle and reduce the pain of the puncture.

Then fold the skin by your left hand and keep it between your fingers: this avoids the drug is injected too deeply.

Proceed with your right hand with the injection: it is not necessary to suck up, inject all the drug of the syringe directly. Then extract the syringe, together with the needle, and throw it away in the waste bin.

Now, with the cotton wad, practice a small pressure for few minutes on the injection place. Do not massage because it help you to prevent hematoma (black marks) in the place of the injection.

As you can see, practicing the heparin therapy is not difficult, but it is very important for your safety and for the good treatment outcome.