

Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy Injection Guide



This information in this booklet has been adapted with permission from Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes, which was based on booklets developed by Fenway Health (Fenwayhealth.org) and the University of Michigan (<http://med.umich.edu/1libr/spinalCordInjuryProgram/IMselfInjectionTesto.pdf>)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Injection Supply Resource List
6	Tips for Reducing Injection Pain
7	Instructions for Disposing of Sharps
8	How to Give Yourself an Intramuscular (IM) Hormone Injection
9	What is Intramuscular Injection
10	Setting Up for the Injection
11	Preparing the Dose
14	Selecting & Preparing the Injection Site
15	Giving the Injection
16	How to Give Yourself a Subcutaneous (SubQ) Hormone Injection
17	What is a Subcutaneous Injection
18	Setting Up for the Injection
18	Preparing the Dose
21	Selecting & Preparing the Injection Site
23	Giving the Injection

NEVER REUSE OR SHARE SYRINGES OR NEEDLES

If you need needles or syringes and cannot afford to get them from your provider or pharmacy, please visit a local needle exchange.

INJECTION SUPPLY RESOURCE LIST

At PPLM, we provide the injection supplies you need as part of your prescription to pick up at your pharmacy. If you run into issues acquiring injection supplies at your local pharmacy, here are some other options to get what you need.

Online Websites for Injection Supplies

Medical and diabetes supply websites are great sources for HRT injection supplies. Needles are generally classified by length and gauge (diameter). Please consult the appropriate injection guide section on intramuscular or subcutaneous injections for the specific needle gauges and lengths you need.

Syringes are generally classified as Luer lock and non-Luer lock (or Luer slip). Luer lock syringes require the needle to be twisted and locked into place, and non-Luer lock or Luer slip syringes require the needle to be pressed onto the tip tightly without a lock. We recommend using 1mL Luer lock syringes for HRT injections (3mL syringes are OK to use but not preferred).

Some medical supply websites that offer injection supplies with discreet shipping/packaging are:

<https://westendmedicalsupplies.com/>

<https://www.gpzmedlab.com/>

<https://medlabgear.com/>

<https://www.exchangesupplies.org/>

<https://www.healthwarehouse.com/>

Never reuse or share needles or syringes! If you cannot afford get them from a local pharmacy or online, visit a needle exchange near you for supplies.

INJECTION SUPPLY RESOURCE LIST

AHOPE Boston Needle Exchange (Boston, MA)

Phone: 617-534-3967

Address: 774 Albany St, Boston, MA 02118

AIDS Action Committee ACCESS Needle Exchange (Cambridge, MA)

Phone: 617-661-3040

Address: 359 Green St, Cambridge, MA

SSTAR Project Aware (Fall River, MA)

Phone: (508-324-3561)

Address: 386 Stanley St, Fall River, MA 02720

Tapestry Health Needle Exchange (multiple locations through Western MA)

- Holyoke
Phone: (413) 315-3732
Address: 306 Race Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
- Chicopee
Phone: (413) 331-3401
Address: 12 Ames Avenue, Chicopee, MA 01013
- Springfield
Phone: (413) 363-9472
Address: 1985 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103
- Northampton
Phone: (413) 586-0310
Address: 16 Center Street, Suite 415, Northampton, MA 01060
- Greenfield
Phone: (413) 475-3377
Address: 40 School Street, Unit 6, Greenfield, MA 01301
- Mobile Harm Reduction Services/Supply Delivery:
<https://www.tapestryhealth.org/harm-reduction/>

Love & Safety Needle Exchange (Ipswich, MA)

Phone: (617) 549-9880

Address: 24 Paradise Rd, Ipswich, MA 01938

INJECTION SUPPLY RESOURCE LIST

Seven Hills Foundation Syringe Services (multiple locations throughout Bristol County)

- Fall River
Phone: (508) 235-1012
Address: 356 South Main St., Fall River, MA 02721
- New Bedford
Phone: (508) 996-0546
Address: 1173 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford, MA 02746
- Taunton
Phone: (508) 967-7170
Address: 9 Winthrop Street, Taunton, MA 02780

AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod Syringe Services (multiple locations throughout the Cape)

- Provincetown
Phone: (508) 487-8311
Address: 96 Bradford Street, Provincetown, MA 02657
- Hyannis
Phone: (508) 778-1954
Address: 428 South Street, Hyannis, MA 02601
- Martha's Vineyard
Phone: (774) 994-7935
Address: 517 State Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

AIDS Project Worcester Syringe Services Program (Worcester, MA)

Phone: (508) 755-3773

Address: 165 Southbridge St, Worcester, MA 01608

The COPE Center Needle Exchange (Brockton, MA)

Phone: (508) 583-3405

Address: 74 Pleasant Street, Brockton, MA 02301

Project RISE Syringe and Needle Exchange (Framingham, MA)

Phone: (508) 935-2960

Address: 1 Grant St #100, Framingham, MA 01702

INJECTION SUPPLY RESOURCE LIST

ONE STOP Needle Exchange (Gloucester, MA)

Phone: (978) 865-3924

Address: 9 Center St., Gloucester, MA 01930

Manet Community Health Center Needle Exchange (Quincy, MA)

Phone: (617) 483-5799

Address: Call for further information about location (program is confidential)

Health Innovations Syringe Exchange (multiple locations throughout northern Greater Boston)

- Lowell

Phone: (781) 473-3324

Address: 205 Middlesex St., Lowell, MA 01852

- Revere

Phone: (781) 805-5118

Address: 437 Revere St., Revere, MA 02151

MA Syringe Service program locator:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/syringe-service-program-locator>

National Syringe Service program locator:

<https://www.nasen.org/map/>

Trans Needle Exchange (free mail-based nonprofit service for one-time or short-term support):

<https://transneedles.org/supplies>

Purchase & Disposal of Sharps Containers

Sharps containers can be bought over the counter at pharmacies in MA, online, or often at your local public health department- be sure to properly dispose of them at safe sharps disposal sites when full!

Find a safe needle disposal near you:

<https://safeneedledisposal.org/states/massachusetts/>

TIPS FOR REDUCING INJECTION PAIN

- **Never reuse needles**
- **Use separate drawing up and injecting needles**
- **Let the skin dry fully from the alcohol wipe before beginning the injection**
- **Keep the muscles in the injection area warm and relaxed**
- **Inject medicine that is at room temperature**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISPOSING OF SHARPS

Improper disposal of syringes, needles, and other sharp objects can pose a health risk and damage the environment. In Massachusetts, it is illegal to dispose of sharps in standard household waste.

To dispose of medical sharps, first place them in a sealable, puncture-resistant container. You can purchase a home sharps container from most pharmacies. Alternatively, you can use a plastic container, such as a liquid-detergent bottle or milk jug, sealed with tape, to transport used sharps.

Disposal sites will not accept loose needles or sharps in bags or glass containers.



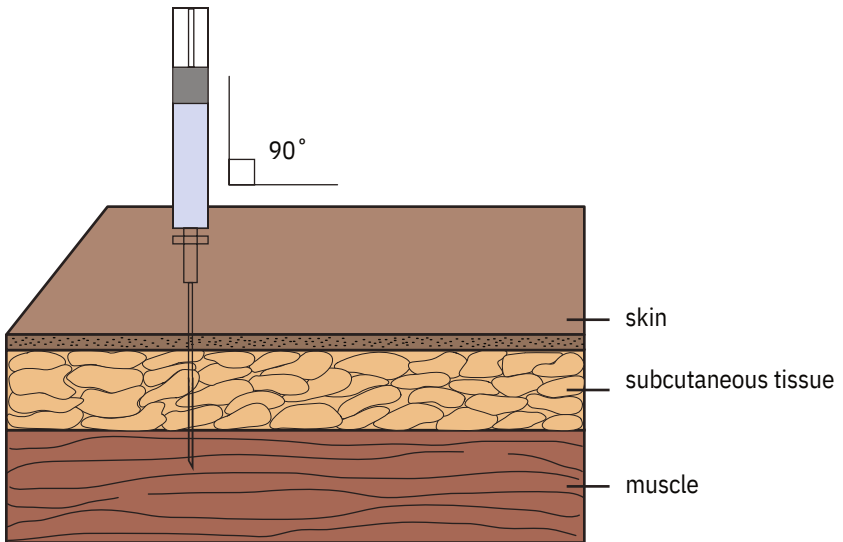
HOW TO GIVE YOURSELF AN INTRAMUSCULAR (IM) HORMONE INJECTION

WHAT IS AN INTRAMUSCULAR INJECTION?

An intramuscular injection, delivers medication deep into the muscle tissue. This allows the medication to be quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.

Intramuscular shots are given at a 90° angle. The needle enters the skin vertically and directly down in a quick, dart-like movement.

Needles for IM injections can be 21-23 Gauge, 1-1.5 inches in length.



STEP

1

SETTING UP FOR THE INJECTION

Find a comfortable, well lit working place and inject at the same time of day each time you do your injection.

- Clean your work area & assemble supplies (figure 1).
- Medication in a vial.
- Disposable syringe and two 21-23 G; 1.5 inch needles (one to draw up medication and one injection needle).
- Alcohol swabs, two (one for vial, one for skin).



(figure 1)

- Puncture proof needle/sharps disposal container.
- Check the expiration date on the medication vial. Do not use a

medication with visible particles, medication that is discolored, or that is past the expiration date. (Medication is generally clear or light yellow when fresh and safe to use.)

- Wash your hands. Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to prevent infection.

STEP

2

PREPARING THE INJECTION DOSE

If you are unsure what your dose is, STOP and call your provider's office for help.



(figure 2)

- Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab (figure 2).
- Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use the syringe. Connect a sterile needle to the syringe.
- Pull the 18 G needle cover straight off the needle. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose of medication that your provider prescribed.
- **Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.**

- Hold the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle (figure 3).
- Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial (figure 4).

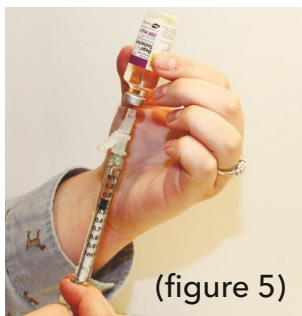


(figure 3)

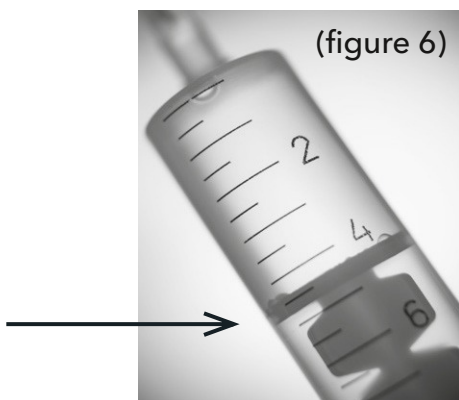


(figure 4)

- Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside.
- Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle. You may need to pull the needle out slightly to make sure the tip is completely covered by the liquid.
- Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your provider ordered (figure 5).



(figure 5)



- Keeping the needle in the vial, check for air bubbles in the syringe. If there are air bubbles, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Then slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe without removing the needle from the bottle.
- After air bubbles are gone, pull the plunger back to the number (mL or cc) marking on the syringe that matches your dose.
- Pull the syringe with needle out of the bottle, remove the needle (discarding it into the sharps container), and place the IM Injection needle securely on the syringe. Remove the protective cap from the injecting needle. Do not press on the plunger while you change needles.
- Check to make sure that you still have the correct dose in the syringe. It is VERY important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your provider (figure 6).

STEP

3

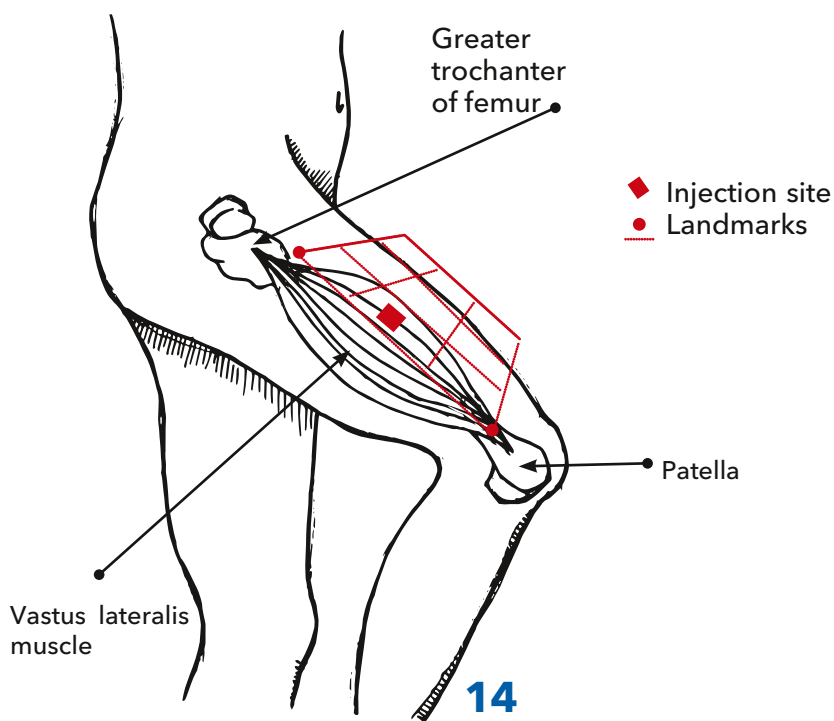
SELECTING AND PREPARING THE INJECTION SITE

Vastus lateralis muscle in the thigh

The upper thigh is a good site if you are doing self-injection of your medication.

To find the appropriate location: Look at the top of your thigh, and imagine dividing it into a three by three grid.

The injection will go into the outer middle third.



STEP

4

GIVE THE INJECTION

- Clean the injection site skin (figure 7) with a new alcohol swab; let the skin air dry (do not pat or blow on skin to dry it.)
- Pull the skin tight around the injection site (figure 8).



(figure 7)



(figure 8)

- Insert the IM needle into the muscle at a 90 degree angle with one quick and firm motion.
- After inserting the needle into the muscle, keep the skin pulled tight and firmly push the plunger down slowly and completely to finish the injection.

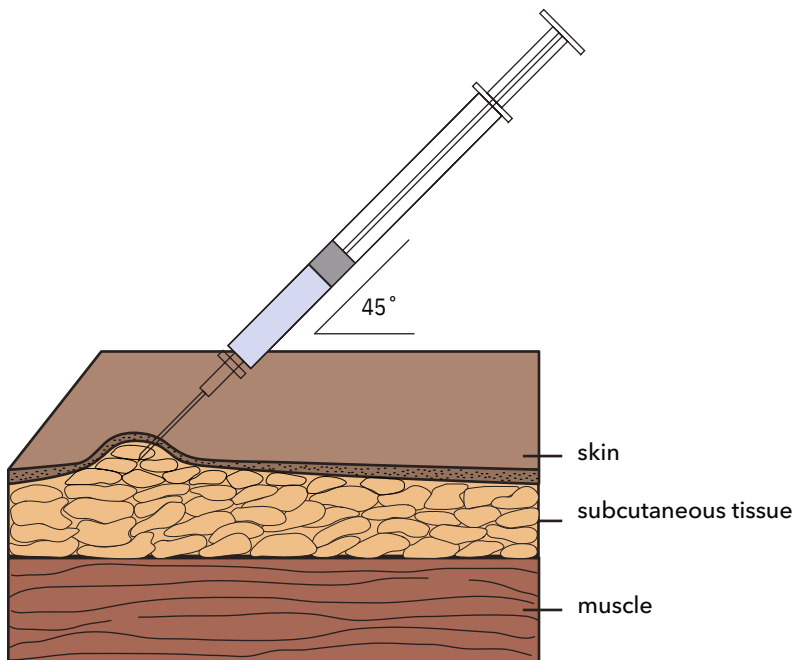
HOW TO GIVE YOURSELF A SUBCUTANEOUS (SUBQ) HORMONE INJECTION

WHAT IS A SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTION?

A subcutaneous injection, delivers medication into the subcutaneous layer of tissue that is directly under the skin.

Medication delivered this way is more slowly absorbed into the bloodstream than medication that is directly injected into the muscle.

Needle for SubQ injections are usually 23-25 Gauge and 5/8" (inch) in length. Medication should never be drawn up through these needles. Use a separate drawing up needle.



STEP

1

SETTING UP FOR THE INJECTION

Find a comfortable, well lit working place and inject at the same time of day each time you do your injection.

- Clean your work area & assemble supplies (figure 1).
- Medication in vial.
- Disposable syringe and two needles - one 22 G; 1.5 inch to draw up the medication and one 23-25 G; 5/8 inch to inject the medication.
- Alcohol swabs, two (one for vial, one for skin).



(figure 1)

- Puncture proof needle/sharps disposal container.
- Check the expiration date on the medication vial.

Do not use a medication with visible particles, medication that is discolored, or that is past the expiration date. (Medication is generally clear or light yellow when fresh and safe to use.)

- Wash your hands. Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to prevent infection.

STEP

2

PREPARING THE INJECTION DOSE

If you are unsure what your dose is, STOP and call your provider's office for help.



(figure 2)

- Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab (figure 2).
- Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use the syringe. Connect a sterile needle to the syringe.
- Pull the 22 G needle cover straight off the needle. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The Amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose of medication that your provider prescribed.
- **Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.**

- Hold the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle (figure 3).
- Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial (figure 4).



(figure 3)



(figure 4)

- Keep the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down.
- Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle. You may need to pull the needle out slightly to make sure the tip is completely covered by the liquid.
- Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your provider ordered (figure 5).



(figure 5)



(figure 6)

- Keeping the needle in the vial, check for air bubbles in the syringe. If there are air bubble, gently tap the syringe with your fingers until the air bubbles rise to the top of the syringe. Then slowly push the plunger up to force the air bubbles out of the syringe without removing the needle from the bottle.
- After air bubbles are gone, pull the plunger back to the number (mL or cc) marking on the syringe that matches your dose.
- Pull the syringe with needle out of the bottle, remove the needle (discarding it into the sharps container), and place the 23-25 G SC needle securely on the syringe. Remove the protective cap from the injecting needle. Do not press on the plunger while you change needles.
- Check to make sure that you still have the correct dose in the syringe. It is VERY important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your provider (figure 6).

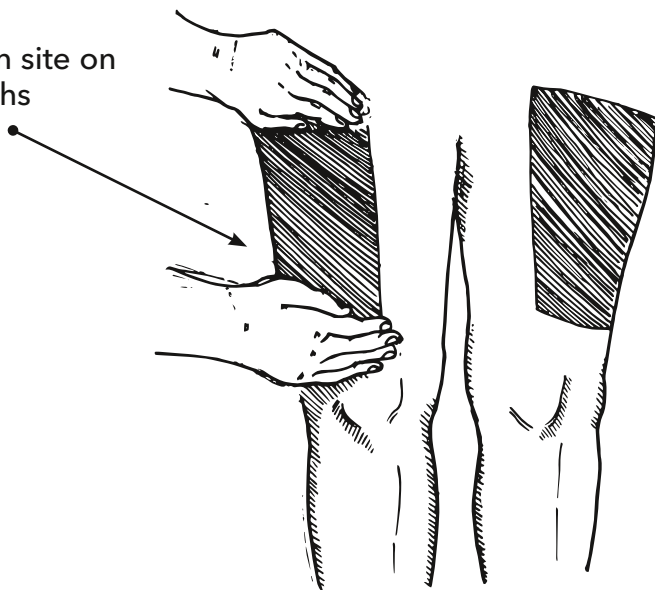
STEP

3

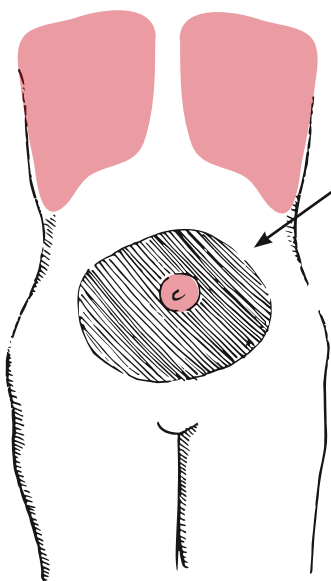
SELECTING AND PREPARING THE INJECTION SITE

There are a few places you can give yourself a subcutaneous injection including the fronts of your thighs or your abdomen

Injection site on
the thighs



Whichever site you choose to inject, you should be able to firmly grasp and pinch up approximately a 1-inch fold of skin.



● Injection site on the abdomen

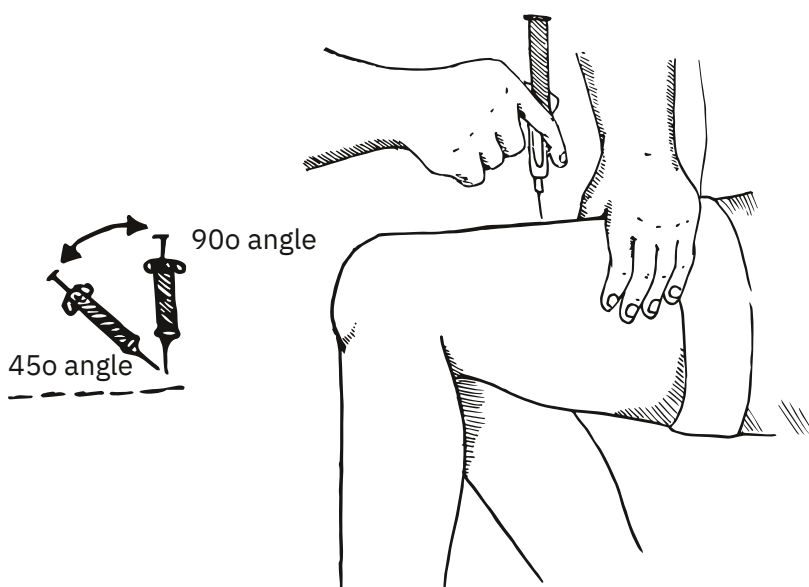
If you choose to inject yourself in the abdomen, avoid the belly button or any bony areas.

STEP

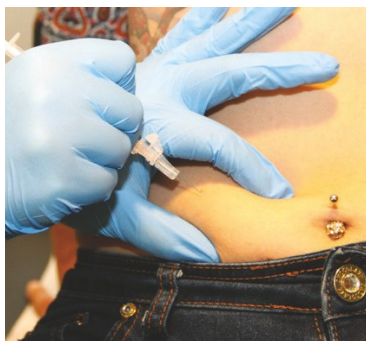
4

GIVE THE INJECTION

- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water and dry them.
- Clean the injection site skin with an alcohol swab; let the skin air dry. Do not pat or rub the skin to dry it.
- Hold the prepared syringe with the hand you will use to give the injection.
- With the other hand, pinch a fold of skin (you will inject into the skin between your fingers).
- With one quick and firm motion, insert the needle either directly into the skin fold at a 90 degree angle, or angle it slightly (45 degrees), if that is easier.



- After inserting the needle under the skin, keep the skin pinched up as you complete the injection by pushing firmly and slowly down completely on the plunger (figure 7).
- Wait 5 seconds, and then pull back on the syringe to remove the needle from your skin. Pull the syringe and needle out at the exact same angle you used to enter the skin. Dispose of the syringe and needle properly, using a sharps container.
- Gently press a sterile piece of gauze on the injection site. Hold pressure on the site until there is no bleeding. You can use a band aid if needed (figure 8).



(figure 7)



(figure 8)

**WE PROVIDE QUALITY,
COMPASSIONATE CARE FROM
AN INFORMED CONSENT MODEL
FOR OUR TRANSGENDER, NON-
BINARY, AND OTHER GENDER-
EXPANSIVE PATIENTS.**

At Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, we serve transgender people and people at various places on the spectrum of gender identity and expression who are 16 and over. For patients who are 16 and 17, we require a parent/guardian consent. If you are under 16, we can refer you to other Massachusetts providers who can give you hormonal care.

**To speak to a nurse if you have a
medical question, please call :
(800-258-4448)**

**For health and wellness information,
resources & referrals:**

**Call: 800-258-4448, option 3
PPLM.org**