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Giving home intravenous (IV) medication by bolus injection

Patient information

This information sheet explains how to give medication by bolus injection. A bolus injection is a single, dose of medication in a syringe. You can also view a video on the Trust's Home Intravenous (IV) therapy service web page. It is important to follow these instructions to make sure medication is given correctly and reduce the risk of infection.

Before you start giving the medication

- Make sure you are in a quiet room, away from anything that may distract you.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- In between the different stages of preparing and giving the medication: use alcohol gel to clean your hands or wash your hands.
- Clean the surface of the table or tray you are using to prepare the medication with antibacterial surface cleaner, disinfectant wipes or warm soapy water. Allow the surface to dry.
- Use this surface to prepare the IV medication.

Giving IV medication by bolus injection

1. Unclamp the IV line.
2. Pick up the saline IV flush (syringe containing sodium chloride solution). Point the syringe upwards and push in the plunger until there is no air left in the syringe and place the lid back on.
3. Remove the lid from the vial containing medication.
4. Tear open the pouch containing a small disposable cleaning wipe. Use the wipe to clean the top of the vial for at least 30 seconds and allow time to dry.
5. Unscrew the top of the mixing liquid (diluent) and place it upright on the clean surface.
6. Open the packages containing the syringe and needle. Put them together, without touching the tip of the syringe or the needle base. Using the syringe, withdraw the mixing liquid.
7. Hold the vial in one hand and the syringe with the other. Push the needle through the rubber on top of the vial and mix the liquid from the syringe into the vial by pushing the syringe plunger.
8. Carefully shake the vial while holding the syringe in place until the medication is fully dissolved.
9. Draw the mixed liquid from the vial into the syringe by slowly pulling the plunger up.
10. Once the medication is inside the syringe, remove the syringe and undo the needle. Place the needle in the yellow sharps bin.

11. Hold the syringe in the palm of one hand and use your other hand to take out the red bung from its package. Fix the red bung to the syringe. Be careful not to touch the tip of the syringe or the end of the bung.
12. When your medication is ready, tear open the pouch containing a small disposable cleaning wipe. Use the wipe to clean the end of the line (also called the bung) for at least 30 seconds and allow time to dry.
13. Remove the lid from the IV flush and place it on the clean surface.
14. Attach the IV flush syringe to the bung and push the plunger until you have given the amount of saline (mls) directed by the nurse, to clean the line before you give the medication. Remove the syringe and replace the lid.
15. Remove the red bung from the syringe containing the medication and attach the syringe to the bung at the end of the line. Push in the plunger until the syringe is empty. This should take between 3-5 minutes. When all the medication has been given remove the syringe from the end of the IV line.
16. Clean the IV line by flushing it again. Remove the lid from the IV flush and attach the syringe to the bung. Slowly push the plunger until you have given the amount of saline (mls) as directed by the nurse.
17. When you have finished flushing, clamp the IV line and remove the syringe.
18. Dispose of any needles, syringes, other equipment and packaging as the nurse has shown you.

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication, please speak to the staff caring for you or contact our medicines advisory service:

Medicines advisory service

Tel: 020 7351 8901 ext. 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

Email: medinfo@rbht.nhs.uk

More information

See videos and more information on the Home Intravenous (IV) therapy service page on Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust's website (www.rbht.nhs.uk).

If you need help or advice about any service or department at our hospitals, and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 7349 7715 or email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.

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