

Using Medication Vials

Introduction

Your home care nurse will give you detailed instruction on how to administer your IV therapy. This teaching sheet is intended to provide “reminders”, and should be used in addition to detailed demonstration and instruction.

Your infusion therapy might include withdrawing medication from a vial and injecting the medication into your catheter, or into another bag of IV fluid or TPN. Follow these basic steps to correctly withdraw and inject medications from vials.

Key Points Regarding Vials

- The rubber top of the vial is NOT sterile. After removing the hard plastic cover, you must clean it with an alcohol wipe.
- Your nurse might teach you to use needle-free vial adaptors so that you do not need to use needles. Specific instructions will be provided.
- If the vial is a “multi-dose” vial, you must store it as instructed by your nurse or pharmacist, and you must throw it away once it has expired. Most multi-dose vials expire 28 days after they have been opened and used for the first time if they have been stored in the refrigerator. Most expire 24 hours after opening if they have been kept at room temperature.

Supplies

- Vial of medication
- Sterile injection needle
- Syringe
- Alcohol wipes

Withdrawing the Medication

1. Prepare a clean working area.
2. Assemble your supplies
3. Wash your hands for 15 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer.
4. Remove the plastic cover from the medication vial top and clean with alcohol for 15 seconds. Allow to air dry.
5. Attach the needle to the syringe.

6. Remove the protective cover from the needle tip and insert the needle into the vial. (It may be helpful to draw some air into the syringe and inject it into the vial before attempting to draw the medication out. It makes it easier to draw the medication out.)
7. Turn the vial upside down and withdraw the prescribed amount of medication.
8. Remove the syringe from the vial.

Injecting Into your IV Solution

1. Clean the injection port of the IV solution container with an alcohol wipe.
2. Insert the syringe into the injection port being careful not to puncture the bag.
3. Slowly inject the medication and then withdraw the needle.
4. Turn the bag of the IV solution upside down several times to mix. DO NOT shake vigorously.
5. Discard the needle only in the sharps container (red plastic container) and throw the rest of your supplies in the trash.

Additional Notes and Instructions