

FTM Australia Infosheet: Injecting Testosterone

Your injectable testosterone is designed to release testosterone most effectively deep inside a large muscle. The testosterone in this deep intra-muscular (IM) injection is suspended in an oil base.

Your testosterone injection must **not** be injected into blood, fat or subcutaneously (just below the surface of the skin).

Please consult with your GP to learn how to inject your medication safely.

Preparation

Primoteston Depot 250mg comes prepared with its own needle. If you use Primoteston, you first need to assemble the injection.

Sustanon 250mg comes in a small ampoule and you will need to have your own syringe and two different size needles to use for the Sustanon250mg injection.

The first needle is used for drawing the medication into the syringe ('drawing up' needle). This is usually a large gauge needle (around 18 or 19 gauge).

The second needle is used for injecting the testosterone into your body ('giving' needle). This is usually a smaller gauge needle (around 20 or 21 gauge).

In Australia, the Sustanon250mg ampoules need to be snapped open. You do this by holding the ampoule with the dot away from you. Then snap the ampoule head in an outward motion away from you. Attach the large 'drawing up' needle onto the syringe. Pick up the syringe with the 'drawing up' needle attached and poke into the ampoule. Pull back on the plunger until you have all the Sustanon from the ampoule in the syringe. Remove the needle from the ampoule and pull back a little on the plunger to remove the remaining liquid from the base of the needle. Remove the needle from the syringe and put into a sharps container. Replace with the finer ('giving') needle.

Never let either of the needles touch another surface before drawing up or injecting. Any foreign particles could be injected deep into your body and cause a serious infection. Whether you are injecting, Primoteston250mg or Sustanon250mg, carefully look at the syringe to see if there are any air bubbles in the liquid. You can usually gently tap the syringe to cause the air bubbles to rise to the surface and then press very gently on the plunger to expel the air through the needle. When you're satisfied the needle is ready, you are ready to inject.

Injecting

The technique

1. Always wash your hands before injecting.
2. Hold the injection like a dart and pierce the skin at a right angle to your body. Press the needle, down into the muscle to within about half a centimetre of the needle base.
3. Pull very gently back on the plunger (aspiration). If blood comes back with the plunger, you are in a blood vessel or blood vein (the wrong spot!). Remove the needle, add a fresh, clean needle and start again.
4. If no blood enters the needle, you are ready to inject the testosterone.
5. Sustanon is very thick, with a honey-like consistency. You'll need to pay extra attention to holding the barrel of the needle tightly to prevent the pressure of injecting from separating the needle and the syringe. Press slowly and firmly down on the plunger.
5. When the syringe is empty, withdraw the needle quickly while applying pressure to the site. Rub or massage the area to help disperse the solution in the muscle and prevent soreness. You might find the injection site bleeds a little bit, so a small Band-Aid or medical tape could come in handy. Dispose of the needle safely in a 'sharps container' (usually a durable plastic container bright yellow in colour).

Some tips

- Run through the procedure in your mind before doing it and prepare everything you need first. You don't want to be looking for a Band-Aid or the sharps container during the procedure.
- Never put your testosterone medication in the fridge. Putting it in the fridge will make it harder to inject into your body.
- Warm the solution just before the injection to make it easier to inject. Roll the full Primoteston syringe or the Sustanon ampoule between your palms quickly to warm the solution. Another way is to run warm water over the ampoule. Injecting after a warm shower can be useful, while the muscle you're injecting into is relaxed and warm.
- If you use a needle smaller than a 21gauge for injecting, it will take too long to inject and also result in a nasty bruise from the pressure of injecting.
- Pulling back too fast when checking you're in the right spot, can cause bruising and soreness. Slowly and gently is best. If you inject too quickly it can hurt or you might also feel some difficulty in breathing. When you (or someone else) injects too quickly, a tiny bit of oil can be forced across the cell membranes into your blood stream. This can end up in your lungs within a second or two. You can feel like you want to cough or some breathing discomfort. If this happens, breathe deeply and stay calm. It usually passes quickly. Always inject slowly.
- When you inject, make sure you go deep enough. Most pain after the injection comes from not injecting deep enough.
- If you learn to inject your own hormones, remember to never share needles or syringes with anyone else.
- Always alternate your injection sites.
- Wash your hands before injecting.

Injecting Sites

Since testosterone is designed to go **deep** into a **large** muscle your best options are either your buttocks (*gluteus maxiumus*, a thick powerful muscle) or the muscle on the outside of your upper thigh (*vastus lateralis*).

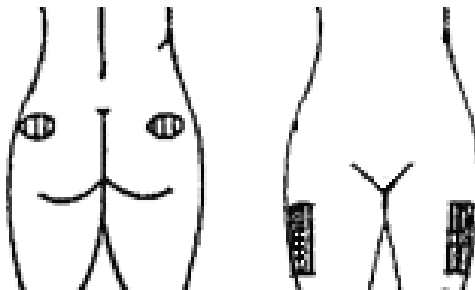


Figure 1 Sites for deep intramuscular injections

Buttocks

Running through the buttock area is your *sciatic nerve*. This is one of the longest nerves in your body running from your spinal cord in your backbone down through each of your buttocks to the soles of your feet.

If you hit this nerve while injecting, you will experience "excruciating and incapacitating pain" which pain-killers won't be able to relieve. To avoid this main nerve, mentally divide each buttock into a grid of four squares: two upper quadrants and two lower quadrants. The best spot to inject is in the upper–outside quadrant of either side (see figure 2).

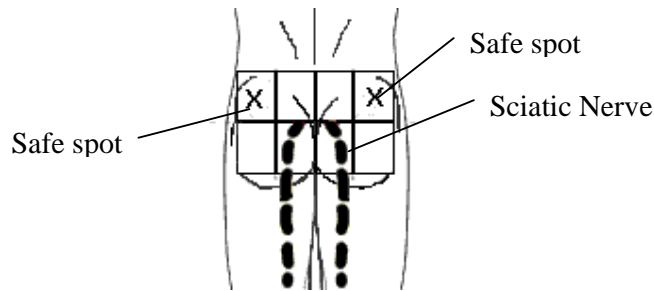


Figure 2 Upper quadrant areas to avoid the sciatic nerve

Some men self-inject into this region by squatting down on their heels. If you have a partner or friend willing to assist, they can inject this region either when you are lying down or standing (see Figure 3).

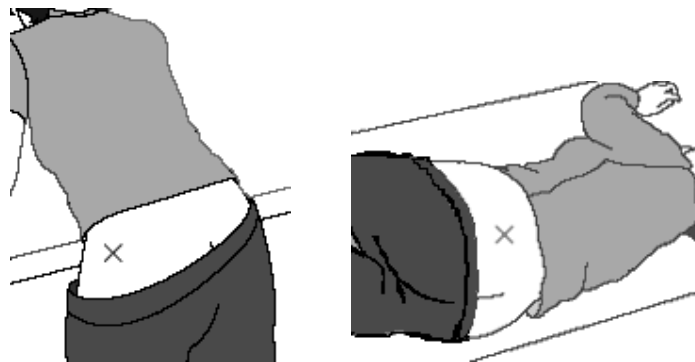


Figure 3 Upper quadrant areas for deep intramuscular injection

Thigh

The thigh muscle you're looking for is the one you use to raise your leg parallel to the floor when you sit in a chair or doing leg extensions at the gym. It is usually a thick and well-developed muscle providing an excellent choice to inject yourself from a sitting or lounging position. An advantage of injecting into this area is the uptake of testosterone is faster than when injected the buttock area.



Figure 4 *Vastus lateralis* sites for deep intramuscular injection

The location you're looking for is about a hand-width (across the knuckles) down from your groin to about a hand-width above your knee. It might be easier if you divide your thigh into three sections. The middle area on the outside of your leg is the safest area to inject (see Figure 5).

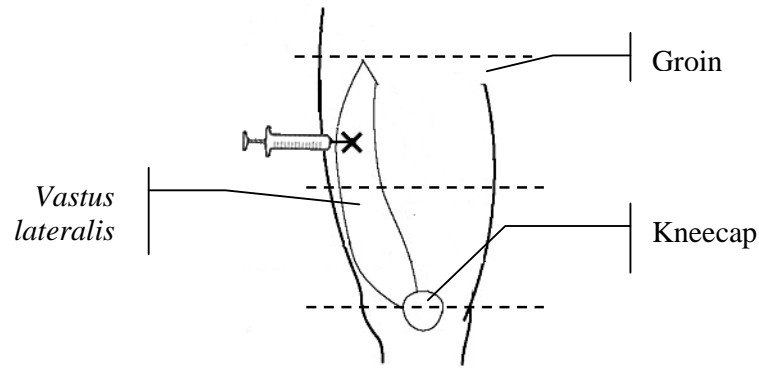


Figure 5 *Vastus lateralis* site for deep intramuscular injection

Disposing of needles

If you self-inject, ask your GP for a sharps container for your used needles. These are a bright yellow hard plastic container available either from your GP or the pharmacist you pick your testosterone up from or a needle exchange service.

When the container is full, don't throw it out in your household rubbish. Your needles should never be disposed in your normal household rubbish. Sharps containers are destroyed in a high temperature incinerator disposal unit. You can ask your GP if you can leave your full sharps containers with them for safe disposal or drop it off at your nearest major hospital.

About FTM Australia

FTM Australia is the national Australian network of men (identified 'female' at birth) and provides contact, support and health information to members, their families, friends and healthcare providers since 2001. www.ftmaustralia.org – mail@ftmaustralia.org – (02) 9566-4110