OSCE checklist for IM injection

An OSCE checklist for IM injection runs from checking the prescription and the patient to choosing a safe site, giving the injection and disposing of the sharp straight away. Use the list below to practise the full sequence out loud.

OSCE checklist for IM injection: steps to practise

1. Read the prescription: patient, drug, dose, route, time, allergies and signature. Check against the medicine.
2. Wash or rub your hands and prepare a clean tray. Check the drug name, expiry and the packaging.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity with two identifiers and explain. Gain consent.
4. Ask about allergies again, and about any previous reaction to this medicine.
5. Draw up the drug using a clean technique, or check the prefilled syringe. Change the needle if your policy says to.
6. Choose and expose the site. Check the skin and the muscle for bruising, swelling or infection.
7. Clean your hands again. Clean the skin if your policy requires it, and let it dry.
8. Insert the needle quickly at the angle you were taught and inject at a steady pace.
9. Withdraw the needle, apply light pressure and cover the site.
10. Dispose of the needle and syringe in the sharps bin at once, without resheathing.
11. Wash your hands, check the patient for any reaction and record the dose, time and site.

What candidates commonly forget

- Giving the second identity check and the allergy check aloud.
- Naming the site and why it is safe, including the landmarks.
- Disposing of the sharp yourself, straight away.
- Recording the site and the time, and signing.
- Saying what you would do for a reaction, and when you would stop and call for help.

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy. Site choice, skin cleaning, whether you aspirate and whether you use the Z-track method differ between countries, courses and drugs, so use your local version. You can practise with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. See also the general OSCE nursing checklist.

Common questions

Which site should I use for an IM injection in an OSCE?

Use the site your course teaches for that drug and patient, and explain how you found it. Local policy takes priority.

Do I aspirate before injecting?

Practice differs between countries and guidelines, so follow your own policy and say what it is.

Can I recap the needle?

No. Put the needle and syringe straight into the sharps bin.

Sources

- WHO best practices for injections and related procedures toolkit
- WHO guideline on safety-engineered syringes for intramuscular, intradermal and subcutaneous injections
- UK Health Security Agency: Immunisation against infectious disease, chapter 4, immunisation procedures

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.