OSCE checklist for subcutaneous injection

An OSCE checklist for subcutaneous injection covers the same safety checks as any injection plus site choice, skin handling and rotating sites, then immediate sharps disposal. Practise it as a flow, not as separate tasks.

OSCE checklist for subcutaneous injection: steps to practise

1. Read the prescription and check patient, drug, dose, route, time, allergies and signature.
2. Wash or rub your hands, prepare a clean tray and check the drug name, expiry and packaging.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity with two identifiers, explain and gain consent.
4. Prepare the injection. For a prefilled syringe, follow the manufacturer's instructions on air bubbles.
5. Choose a site with healthy fatty tissue. Avoid scars, bruises, lumps and areas used recently.
6. Expose the site and clean your hands again. Clean the skin if your policy requires, and allow it to dry.
7. Gather the skin if your policy says to, insert the needle at the angle you were taught and inject steadily.
8. Withdraw the needle and activate any safety device. Do not rub the site if your drug or policy says not to.
9. Put the needle and syringe in the sharps bin straight away.
10. Wash your hands, check the patient, and record dose, time and site, so the next site can be rotated.

What candidates commonly forget

- Rotating sites and saying so.
- Reading the manufacturer's instructions for the specific device.
- Not rubbing the site after certain drugs.
- Disposal of the sharp at the point of use.

- Explaining the injection to the patient, including what they might feel.

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. Needle angle, skin pinching and what to do with air in a prefilled syringe depend on the drug, the device and the country, so use the 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

Where can I give a subcutaneous injection?

Use the sites your course teaches, with healthy fatty tissue, and rotate them. Say which site you chose and why.

Should I rub the site afterwards?

Follow the drug and your policy. For some drugs rubbing is discouraged because it can cause bruising.

Do I need to remove air from a prefilled syringe?

Not always. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and your policy.

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.