

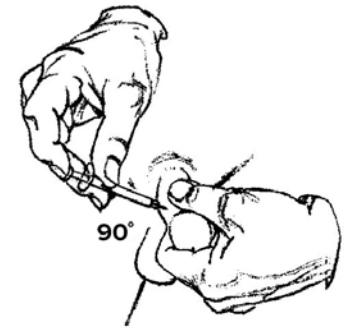
Penile Injection Therapy

How do penile injections work?

Penile injections, also called intracavernosal injections or ICI, are used to help form erections.

The medication works by relaxing the muscle in your penis, which allows more blood to flow in and forms an erection. After injecting the medication, you can expect an erection within 5–20 minutes that ideally lasts between 30–60 minutes.

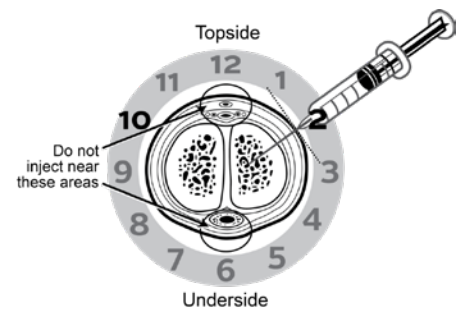
When the medication wears off, the blood from the penis returns into the body and the penis becomes soft again.



Where do I inject the medication?

You must inject into a specific area of your penis. This is so you do not injure nerves, arteries, or veins. The injection is given anywhere from the mid-shaft to the base of the penis, at the 2 o'clock or 10 o'clock position (see picture).

You will only need to inject in one side of the penis to make a firm erection.



What are the side effects?

Priapism: There is a small risk for priapism, which is an erection that lasts for too long (more than 2 hours) after injecting. Priapism can develop without sexual stimulation and does not go away after ejaculation. If your penis does not have access to fresh blood flow, the tissue can become damaged, which can lead to permanent erectile dysfunction. We recommend you purchase a medication called Sudafed (pure Pseudoephedrine Hydrochloride) which can help soften your penis in case priapism occurs. If your penis stays firm for 3 hours, you must proceed to the emergency department for additional treatment.

Scarring: A rare side effect is to develop scarring inside the penis, which can lead to your penis becoming curved. If you feel any hardened areas in your penis, or notice a curve developing with your erections, stop injecting and contact your urologist.

Bleeding and Bruising: Injecting into your penis can sometimes cause bleeding and bruising. If bleeding occurs, hold a gauze or Band-Aid to the injection site until bleeding stops.

Feeling faint: This is a natural response to injecting and is common for many people. If you feel faint during injection, stop injecting and lie down for 15–20 minutes.

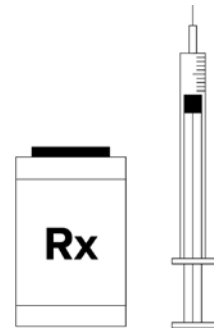
If you are having problems with injecting, ask your sexual health clinician about a device you can purchase called “Inject-Ease”. You may also want to ask your partner to do the injection if this is a concern for you.

How often can I use penile injections?

Do not inject more than once per 24-hour period and no more than 3 times per week. If you inject and do not receive the desired response, do not re-inject, you must wait 24 hours.

Where can I purchase the medication?

You need a prescription for the medication. Ask your urologist or sexual rehabilitation clinician for more information. Your prescription must be brought to a compounding pharmacy.



Who should not use penile injections?

If you have poor eyesight or have limited hand movement, penile injections may not be the best option for you. You may also want to consider a different treatment if you have a bleeding disorder or are taking blood-thinning medications.

Will the injections hurt?

If you inject properly, the injections are almost painless. You will use the smallest needle possible (an insulin needle) to inject the medication. Sometimes the medication itself can cause aching or pain in the penis after injecting. If this happens to you, let your sexual rehabilitation clinician or urologist know.

Where can I learn how to inject

Contact your sexual health clinician or urologist for a teaching session. During this session, your healthcare provider will show you how to prepare the medication, where to inject properly, and how to find the best dose for you.

Ask for a copy of our Penile Injection Therapy Booklet for more detailed information about penile injections.

For more information:

1. Go to pcscprogram.ca – scroll down to Modules and click on - Managing the Sexual Impact of Prostate Cancer Treatments – then scroll down to Prostate Cancer and Sexuality Series and click on - Penile Injection Therapy for Erectile Dysfunction
2. Go to aboutmen.ca and click on - Understanding Penile Injection
3. Prostate Cancer Supportive Care Program - Penile Injection Therapy Booklet



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Making better decisions together with patients and families