

Self-administered penile injections to produce an erection

Penile injection is used as second-line treatment for erectile dysfunction in men where modern oral drugs such as Viagra/Levitra/Cialis have failed or where men are unable to take this medication.

Most men respond well to self-injection. Minor discomfort and bruising are common. Significant complications – such as persistent erection for more than 4-6 hours (priapism) are very rare (<2%).

What does the treatment involve?

Injection of a drug (e.g. Caverject, Viridal, Invicorp) into the side of the penis to produce an erection of sufficient rigidity to allow penetrative intercourse.

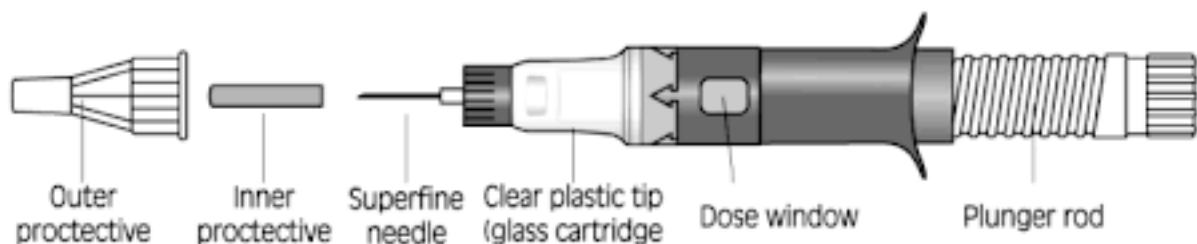
What are the alternatives?

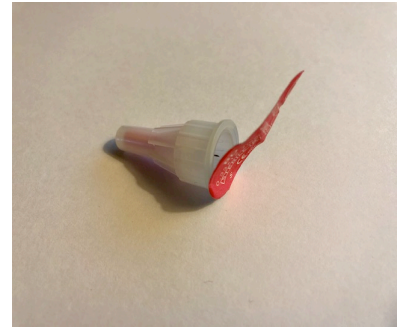
- Oral medication (so called PDE5 inhibitors such as Sildenafil (Viagra), Vardenafil (Levitra) or Tadalafil (Cialis))
- Urethral pellets (medicated urethral system for erection = MUSE)
- Vacuum pumps
- Psychosexual counselling
- Penile implants (malleable or inflatable silicone implants)

Details of the procedure – Step-by-step Instructions for Caverject (dual chamber device)

It is important to understand how to carry out the injections correctly to achieve a satisfactory result. Please follow the instructions carefully.

The injection device consists of the following elements:





Step 1 – Preparation

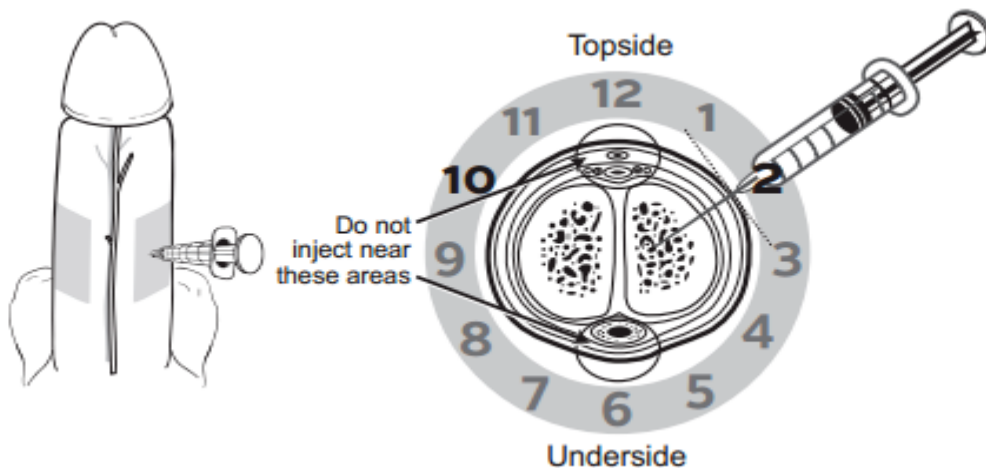
1. Wash your hands and open the box with the medication. Remove one of the injections devices and needles from the box and peel the foil cover from the needle.
2. Attach the needle to the device by pushing it on to the tip of the device. Turn clockwise until it is firmly in place. The injection needle is enclosed in two protective caps. Pull off the outer protective cap, but keep the needle under the pink inner protective cap.
3. Hold the device with the needle pointing upwards. The plunger rod should be in the extended position.
4. Turn the plunger rod clockwise until it stops. This mixes the powder and liquid. Gently shake to make sure that the solution is evenly mixed and the powder has dissolved. Do not use if it remains cloudy or contains particles.
5. To remove any large bubbles from the solution, flick the cartridge with your finger until the bubbles disappear.
6. Keeping the device upright, make sure that the plunger rod is fully turned to the stop by screwing it to the right (clockwise), then immediately press the plunger rod as far as it will go. A few drops will appear at the needle point. It is normal for small bubbles to be at the side of the glass cartridge.
7. Turn the end of the plunger rod slowly clockwise to select your dose. There are four dosage options. Each option is one of four quarterly parts of a full dose delivered by the device. The number appearing in the window indicates the dose of the injection. If you make a mistake, continue to turn the plunger rod clockwise until you reach the correct dose.
8. Once prepared the injection can be used within the next 24 hours provided it is kept at room temperature.



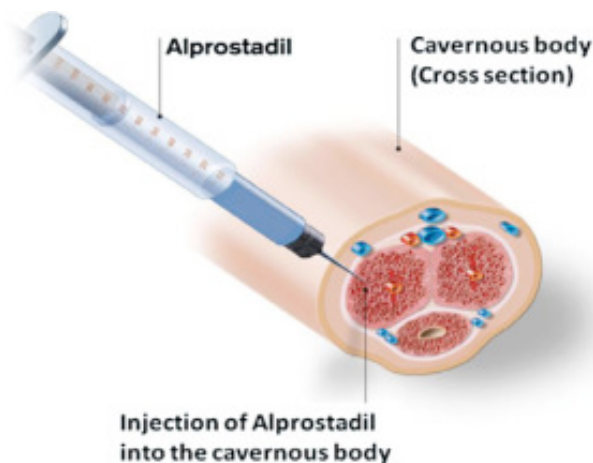


Step 2 – How to do the injection

1. Get undressed, make yourself comfortable and relax. Use an alcohol-cleansing pad and wipe it over the injection site.
2. Make sure the needle is not bent as it may break. If it is bent do not use it and throw it away. Do not attempt to straighten it out.
3. Take hold of your penis with two – three fingers underneath the mid shaft and the thumb on top. Gently squeeze the penis between your thumb and fingers so that the injection site bulges out.



4. The injection should go into either the right or left side of the penis – not into the top, the underside or the head of the penis.



5. Keeping a firm grip on the penis and taking the syringe in your free hand, push the needle straight through the skin all the way into the bulgy part avoiding visible veins or obvious blood vessels.
6. Push the plunger firmly and if the solution does not come out fairly easily, move the needle slightly and try again.
7. Pull the needle out. Massage the penis to help the drug spread through it.
8. Do not keep any mixture in the cartridge to use for a second injection. When you have finished with the needle, throw it away carefully as recommended.

Frequently asked questions

What dose should I use to start the treatment?

In the beginning you want to choose a dose that produces a response without causing an erection that lasts longer than necessary. If you have never used the injection therapy before, you should normally start with a dose of 5 or 7.5 micrograms. You will need to turn the rod until either the number 5 or 7.5 appear in the dial window. This means that you will inject half or three quarters of the solution when you press the plunger during the injection; - half or a quarter of the fluid will remain in the chamber once you have injected the chosen dose.

What can I expect after the injection?

It can take up to 15min to get the full effect of the injection and until you develop an erection. Your first erection using this technique normally lasts for about 45min. If you get an ache in your penis for a few hours after the injection, but the erection goes down, there is no need to be concerned. This happens in about 1/3rd of all patients. If the discomfort becomes severe, you should speak to your GP, urologist or nurse practitioner who will advise an alternative medication to use in future.

What happens if I inadvertently inject the substance into the wrong place on my penis?

Injecting the substance into any other place than the corporal body of your penis can cause swelling, bruising or discomfort. It usually does not result in any serious complications, but you will not develop an erection.

Are there any side effects or complications?

Like all medicines, the penile injection therapy can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them:

<i>Side-effect/complication</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Discomfort at the injection site</i>	<i>common</i>
<i>Bruising under the skin of the penis</i>	<i>10-50%</i>
<i>Pain inside your penis when you erection develops</i>	<i>20-30%</i>
<i>Scarring/bending of penis on erection following repeated injections into the same side</i>	<i>10-20%</i>
<i>Failure to achieve an erection</i>	<i>10-20%</i>
<i>Persistent painful erection lasting longer than 4-6 hours requiring A&E attendance (priapism)</i>	<i><2%</i>
<i>Infection/inflammation at injection site</i>	<i><2%</i>

What should I do if my penis remains erect for more than 4-6 hours after injection?

A **persistent painful erection lasting longer than 4-6 hours in the absence of sexual activity is an emergency that requires immediate treatment.** It is called “priapism” and it is a very rare complication of the treatment. You should seek help at your nearest Emergency Department. Tell them what injection you have had, and your emergency doctor will know what to do to resolve the problem. Failure to seek help immediately may lead to fibrosis of the erectile tissue that may make it impossible for you to develop erections in future.

How do I store Caverject dual chamber?

Keep the cartridge and needles out of the reach and sight of children. You can prepare your injection up to 24 hours before using it, provided it is kept below or at 25 degrees Celsius. Do not use any injections after the expiry date on the pack. The injections are for single use only. Medicines and particularly needles should not be disposed of via household waste or wastewater. Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of medicines no longer required.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in case of any further questions or concerns.

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