

a series of fact sheets written  
by experts in the field of liver  
disease

## HCV Treatment

### Side Effect Management:

# Injection Site Reactions

Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief

*Some people may experience a generalized skin reaction in the area where the interferon injection is given. If there is continued pain, swelling, irritation or infection at the injection site, check with a medical provider immediately. Fortunately, the most common site reaction is mild and more of a nuisance than a problem. But it is important that the necessary steps are taken to ensure that the correct injection techniques are followed.*

### Safety Tips:

- Review injection techniques found in the medication package insert
- Wash hands with soap and water to prevent infection
- Make sure that the area to be injected is clean and sterile before giving an injection
- Apply alcohol and let dry before injecting (10-20 seconds)
- Make sure drug is at room temperature
- The easiest and least painful areas to inject include the stomach or thigh—avoid injecting into the waistline or to close to the navel.
- Inject at a 90-degree angle
- Do not massage injection site

- After injecting, cover the site with a bandage
- Clothing can irritate the injection site so wear loose natural fabrics
- The size of the needle is important - check with a physician or pharmacist for recommendations and a prescription if needed
- Rotate injection sites—use a different place each time you inject. Some people alternate between the stomach and the thigh to make sure they do not accidentally inject in the same spot.
- Topical creams can help with minor irritations

Talk to a medical professional about over-the-counter or prescription medication. Some examples of medications used to alleviate itching include hydrocortisone topical creams and oral antihistamines, such as Benadryl or Atarax, which can also help with sleeping problems.

It is also important to remember that needles and syringes should never be reused and that used needles and syringes should be placed in a puncture-proof disposable container that is available through your pharmacy or healthcare provider (Sharp's container). Do not throw the container into your household trash. Dispose of the full container as instructed by your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

**For more information about hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HCV coinfections, please visit [www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org).**

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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