ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINES

Recommended needle size, length and angle for administering vaccines

Age or size of child/adult	Needle type	Angle of needle insertion
Infant, child or adult for IM vaccines	23 or 25 gauge,* 25mm in length†	90° to skin plane
Preterm babies (<37weeks' gestation) up to age 2 months; very small infants	23 or 25 gauge,* 16mm in length†	90° to skin plane
Very large or obese patient	23 gauge, 38 mm in length	90° to skin plane
Subcutaneous injection in all individuals	25 or 26 gauge, 16mm in length	45° to skin plane

* If using a narrow gauge needle for an IM vaccination, ensure vaccine is injected slowly over a count of 5 seconds to avoid injection pain and muscle trauma.

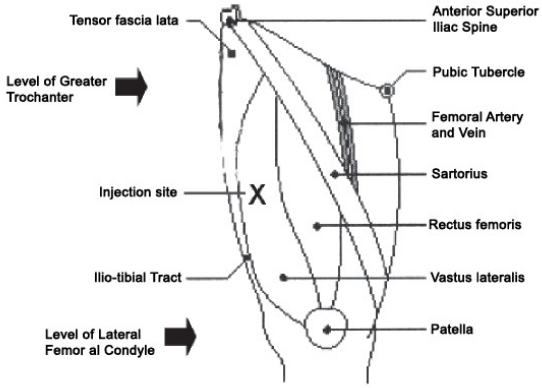
† The use of short needles for administering IM vaccines may lead to inadvertent subcutaneous (SC) injection and increase the risk of significant local adverse events, particularly with aluminium-adjuvanted vaccines (eg. hepatitis B vaccine, DTPa, DTPa-combinations or tetanus vaccine).

Recommended injection sites

The choice of injection sites depends primarily upon the age of the individual being vaccinated. The 2 anatomical sites recommended as routine injection sites are the anterolateral thigh and the deltoid muscle.

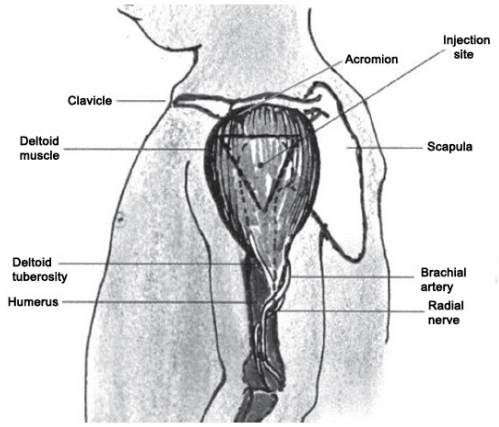
Infants <12 months of age

The vastus lateralis muscle in the anterolateral thigh is the recommended site for IM vaccination in infants <12 months of age.



Children ≥ 12 months of age

The deltoid muscle is the recommended site for IM vaccination in children ≥12 months of age.



Adolescents and adults

The deltoid muscle is the recommended site for IM vaccination in adolescents and adults. The anterolateral thigh can also be used in older children and adults.

Subcutaneous injection sites

Subcutaneous injections should be administered either over the deltoid muscle or over the anterolateral thigh.

The ventrogluteal area is an alternative injection site for all age groups. However, vaccine providers should be familiar with the landmarks used to identify this site.