



TIPS FOR PATIENTS ON HANDLING BIOLOGICAL DRUGS AT HOME

A RESOURCE FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS FROM
THE REALHOPE CONSORTIUM



More Information:
www.realhope.se

Help Your Patients Become Familiar with Biologic Drugs

Patients need your help in understanding how biologics are different from other medications.

Biologic Drugs- effective but sensitive!

Explain to the patient that biologic drugs require additional care during storage, handling, and administration to guarantee their efficacy and avoid microbial contamination.

Empower patients for safer therapies

Advise your patients to:

- Keep a list of their medications with them at all times.
- Share a copy of the medication list with a family member/friend to provide support in the case of an emergency.
- Check their medications when received to be sure that they are correct and, if unsure, consult the pharmacist or healthcare professional before taking the drug.
- Keep a calendar to help schedule their medications.



Advise Your Patients about how to Prepare and Administer Biologic Drugs

Dosage, duration of treatment and adherence

Explain the treatment and the importance of adhering to the recommended dosage schedule provided by you or a doctor.

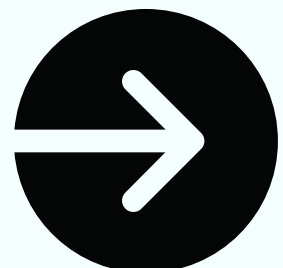
Recommend the patient to:

- Adhere to the recommended schedule, unless there are serious side effects or unforeseen circumstances such as sickness.
- Take any missing dose as soon as possible unless it is almost time for the next dose, for example, the next day. Tell them not to double the dose.
- Report to your doctor any missed doses, side effects, or if the medication schedule is too difficult to follow.

Route of administration

Explain how the drug is provided (prefilled syringe, pen, multidose vials, cartridge) and which is the route of administration. Recommend the patient to:

- Read the instructions to know which parts of the body are suitable for injections.
- Advise the patient to change the local site of injection with each administration.
- Advise the patient to seek professional help if not confident in the administration process.



Preparation of drugs

Recommend to the patient to:

- Identify whether the drug is a ready-to-use syringe/pen or if it needs to be prepared before injection.
- Follow the administration guidelines that come with the medication. Seek help from a family member/friend if they are not confident with drug preparation.
- Take out drugs stored in the refrigerator before use so that they can reach room temperature before administration.
- Not shake biological drugs.
- Identify which medical devices can be used for injection, where they can be purchased, and not to use other devices in place of those recommended.

Training is important!

Train the patient on how to prepare and inject the drug.

- Open the medication box and show the materials provided.
- Use a test-syringe/pen to demonstrate administration or, if possible, be present at the patient's first self-administration.
- Introduce any tools to assist in administration, such as a dosing wheel or a syringe with transparent holes to confirm a successful injection.

Any doubt?

In case of doubt, ask to the pharmacist or consult the Summary of Product Characteristics of the drug that you can find on EMA website <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en>.



Advise your Patient about Storage and Handling of the Drug

For drugs that need to be stored in the fridge

Advise your patient to:

- Store the medication in the refrigerator, but keep it away from areas where it may freeze and do not store it in the refrigerator door.
- Throw out medications that have been frozen or kept warm (above 8 °C) for too long.
- Check the instructions to see how long the medication can stay out of the refrigerator.
- Use ice packs and a thermal bag while travelling, including when picking up the medication from the pharmacy or hospital. Do not put medication in the checked-in luggage while travelling. Be extra careful about warming medication while travelling in a car.

Safe storage and disposal

Advise your patient to:

- Keep medications out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep the medicine in the original packaging to protect it from light, even when stored in the refrigerator.
- Throw away used syringes or pens in a suitable needle-resistant container.
- Do not keep out-of-date medicine. Return unused medication to the pharmacist or hospital.
- Consult a pharmacist or FDA's homepage if they have questions about storage and disposal.



Advise your Patient to Keep in Contact with their Healthcare Provider

The patient should have a dedicated healthcare professional to contact in case of issues.

Advise your patient to:

- Keep healthcare providers informed about the patient's medication and dietary supplements (including vitamins and herbs) to prevent unwanted drug interactions.
- Get advice from health care providers about travelling with biologics.
- Do not take other medicines unless they have been discussed with a doctor.
- If planning a baby, become pregnant or intend to breastfeed, refer the patient to their doctor as soon as possible



This information was created as a part of the Real hope project



RealHOPE is a 4 year research project that aims to measure real-life events during drug handling to develop methods for simulating these events. We hope that the results of the RealHOPE project will aid the development of more robust protein drugs with increased safety for patients. The project has received funding from IMI, EU Horizon2020 and EFPIA companies.

**You can find more information at
www.realhope.se**

