

Illnesses and Treatment - Activity Option 3



When rabbits do become ill they need to be properly treated in order to get better. Certain illnesses can be treated with injections. Where the medication, that treats the illness by in-activating the microorganism that causes it, is pulled into a syringe and injected into the rabbit. The most common type of injection given to rabbits is a subcutaneous injection, an injection between the skin and muscle tissue. In this activity you will learn how to give a subcutaneous injection. **NOTE:** Never give an injection to a rabbit without first checking with your veterinarian.

Giving a Subcutaneous injection

Materials

- Bananas
- Water with red food coloring mixed in (**medication**)
- A syringe with needle (1cc syringes)
- Optional: gloves, alcohol wipes

How to fill the syringe

1. Place the needle of the syringe in the container with the **medication**.
2. Slowly pull back on the plunger, at the back of the needle till you reach the 1 mark.
Note: Because this syringe is 1cc, the 1 mark is a hundredth part of a cc. This is the most common syringe use on rabbits.

How to give a subcutaneous injection

1. Restrain your banana, and select the injection site. The injection site may be anywhere on the body of the banana as long as the medication is injected between the peel (**skin**) and the fruit (**muscle**).
2. After selecting the exact site, pinch the skin gently between thumb and forefinger just above the selected site.
3. Gently pull on the skin so that it feels like its separating from the muscle. (In a rabbit the skin would stretch out and look like a like a tent).
4. With your other hand clean the area with an alcohol wipe. Dispose of the wipe, pick up the prepared syringe with that hand and remove the protective needle cap.
5. Place the point of the needle against the skin, do not penetrate yet, at the selected site. The needle and syringe should be at a 45 degree angle with the skin.
6. Gently, but firmly, push the needle into the skin, just deep enough to penetrate the skin, but not the muscle tissue under the skin.
7. Prior to dispensing the medication, make sure that the needle point has not been placed accidentally into a vein.
 - a. This may be done by pulling back on the plunger (**aspirating**) while examining the barrel of the syringe for white/yellow pulp (**blood**). If blood is present there is no harm done, it just indicates the placement is in a vein.
 - b. Withdraw the needle and repeat steps 1-7, slightly ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) to right or left of original location.
8. After aspiration without the appearance of blood in the syringe barrel, the medication is injected by **SLOWLY** pushing the plunger until barrel is empty.
9. Withdraw the needle, swab with alcohol wipe, gently massage the area and properly dispose of equipment used.



Reflect/ Apply Questions

1. Peel the banana you injected. What do you see?
2. How do you know that you injected the banana in the correct location?
3. What was the most difficult part of giving the injection?
4. Why did you use a banana, instead of another fruit?

