

ADMINISTERING DRUGS BY INJECTION

The only routine injections that have to be given by owners involve stabilisation of the diabetic dog using insulin. Your veterinary surgeon will have discussed the technique but the following questions and answers may be of help.

Will the injection be painful?

Your vet will have supplied you with suitable syringes and needles together with the drug to be injected. Single-use needles ensure that a very sharp needle is used each time and since this is very fine most dogs do not feel the injection.

What happens if my dog moves when I give the injection?

If at all possible have someone to assist holding the dog still while you give the injection. Provided you have not been otherwise instructed giving the dog a little food to take his mind off what is happening usually ensures he keeps still while you give the injection. This is a very useful ploy if you have to give the injection without help.

Is there any danger if he doesn't keep still?

Most owners are concerned that they may break the needle off but this is extremely unlikely. It may bend but much more likely the injection may end up outside the animal rather than inside. It is for this reason that it is suggested you try to secure help to ensure the dog is kept still when the injection is administered.

Can you explain the exact technique of giving an injection?

Subcutaneous injections are placed beneath the skin which in the dog is considerably looser than with us. Your veterinary surgeon may or may not advise swabbing the skin with a detergent or spirit to clean and sterilise it. In some cases this is unnecessary. A fold of skin is lightly held between thumb and forefinger and raised from the underlying tissue. The syringe should either be held like a pencil or a dagger with the other hand. The needle is inserted swiftly into the fold of skin, keeping the barrel roughly parallel with the fold but with the needle angled downwards. Most injections are given in syringes small enough to allow the plunger to be depressed with the palm of the same hand once the needle has been positioned. This should be done fairly swiftly. Once the injection has been completed the needle is then quickly removed and the area thoroughly massaged. If you cannot manage the one handed technique the importance of having someone hold the dog is even greater. The only difference in the technique is that the other hand is then used to depress the plunger. The syringe is then removed as before and the site rubbed.