

Instructions for Giving Subcutaneous Fluids

Equipment: Lactated Ringers Fluid bag, primary I. V. line, needles- 18 or 20 gauge.

Preparation: Remove LRS bag and primary I.V. line from protective outer packaging. To open fluid bag, hold end with white stopper up right and pull out stopper. Keep that end up to avoid accidentally spilling the fluids. Remove cover from needle-shaped end of primary I.V. line and insert plastic needle firmly into inverted fluid bag opening. Open an 18 or 20 gauge needle by twisting colored plastic cover off and attach needle to end of primary I.V. line (after removing protective cap from I.V. line). Keep safety cover on needle to avoid injury. Release fluid line clamp by rolling the round plastic clamping device with your thumb towards the wider end closest to bag while holding bag high enough for fluid to flow freely. Carefully remove needle's safety cover and run fluids through line until there are no bubbles left in line. Close clamp by rolling round clamping device down until fluid flow is stopped. To avoid injury when replacing needle cover, set cover on counter or table top, then slide needle tip into cover with one hand. Use an inanimate object like the counter or a nearby wall to push the cover on more securely before touching the now covered needle with your other hand. The line is now primed for use.

Procedure: Lift loose skin on top of pet's shoulder blade area with thumb and forefinger of one hand to make a "tent" of skin. Uncover needle and place needle at base of "tent" with other hand. Gently advance needle tip through skin. You will feel skin "pop" when needle is through. Be careful not to advance needle too far (don't poke through the far side of your tent). Just the tip and a small part of the needle shaft need to be under the skin. Release skin tent and gently hold needle in place with finger tips, keeping needle flat against pet's body. Hold, or hang fluid bag above your head so gravity will help fluids flow. Unclamp fluid line and allow fluids to flow through line and needle into subcutaneous tissue. They should make a fluid bubble under the skin with no leaking or bleeding. If leaking occurs, or if you see blood, pull needle back out and start over in new location nearby. To check that fluids are flowing easily, look at the transparent plastic bulb in the top end of the primary line that is inserted in the fluid bag. You should see fluid dripping or streaming down through the line. If the bulb is too full of fluid, clamp line, invert bag, and squeeze plastic bulb to return some fluid to the bag until bulb is about half full. Return bag to upright position and release clamp. Fluid flow should be evident if needle is properly placed under pet's skin. Squeezing the fluid bag will make fluids flow more quickly. When desired amount of fluids have been given, or, when skin bubble becomes too taut, like an overfilled balloon, it is time to stop or to change sites. Clamp fluids closed. Gently pull needle out of skin with twisting motion and apply direct pressure to hole in skin with clean gauze as necessary to prevent leakage. Congratulations! You have given subcutaneous fluids.

Tips: Change needles after every use. They become dull quickly. Also, when storing leftover fluids in fluid bag, make sure fluid line is securely clamped so fluids do not leak out. Firmly roll clamping device all the way down to the bottom, as far as it will go.