

Depot injections: quick guide

What they are, and what care staff should look out for and report

A depot injection is a slow-release form of medicine, given into a large muscle by a healthcare professional, usually every two, three or four weeks. Only give one if you are trained, competent and authorised.

Look out for at the injection site

- Pain, soreness or irritation
- Redness, swelling or lumps
- Bruising or bleeding
- Numbness
- A painful collection of pus (abscess)

Side effects

- Generally the same as the same medicine taken by mouth
- May last longer if they happen, because the medicine is released slowly
- Report new side effects and any change in mental or physical health

Supporting the person

- ☐ Know when the next injection is due
- ☐ Support the person to attend, or be at home for it
- ☐ Report a missed or late injection promptly
- ☐ Record injections and concerns in line with your policy
- ☐ Involve the person, and help them get the Patient Information Leaflet if they want it

Sources (checked 13 October 2026): Mind: Depot injections (antipsychotics) (published September 2020, under review); NHS Borders: Use of antipsychotic depot and long acting injections guideline (Right Decisions). Some wording in this guide comes from Mind. © Mind. This information is published in full at mind.org.uk

A quick-reference resource only. Always follow the person's care plan, your organisation's policies and procedures, and current national guidance.

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