



**Safe Pig Handling**

**Vaccinating &  
Treating**



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# Vaccinating & Treating

## Step 1

**Slow down and properly restrain animals to reduce risk of puncture injuries or lacerations to handlers and pigs.**



## Step 2 **Make safety a priority when working with needles.**

- Leave the cap on the needle until you are ready to inject the first pig.
- Attach a needle guard to the syringe whenever possible.
- Choose the correct size needle for the pig you are injecting.
  - Piglets, nursery pigs, market or finishing hogs, and breeding stock will all need different sizes of needles. Refer to your farm protocol or to the materials available at [www.pork.org](http://www.pork.org) for additional information related to proper needle size.



## Step 3

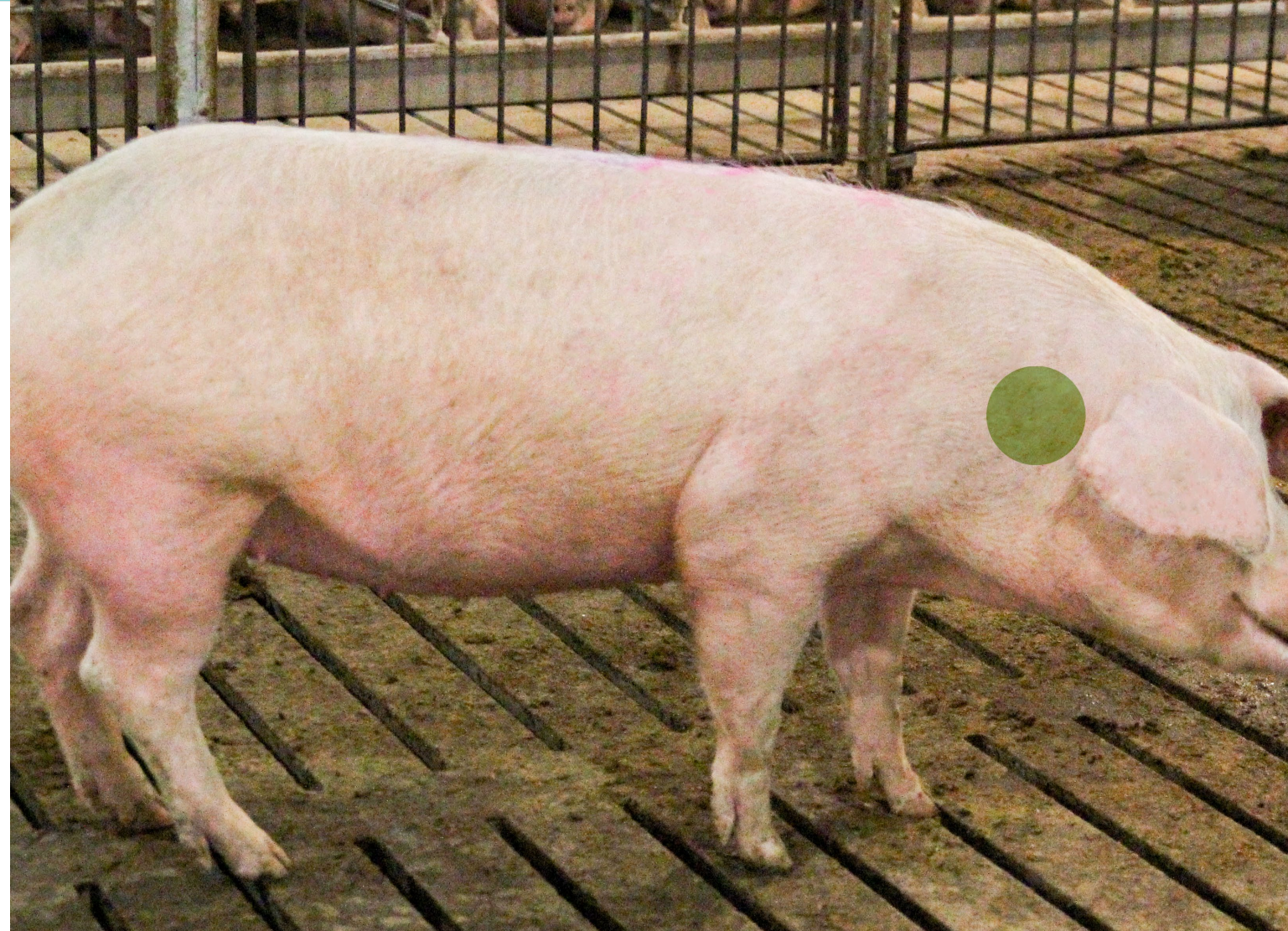
**Follow safety guidelines to keep yourself safe from accidental injections.**

- ALWAYS
  - Carry the syringe in your hand with the needle pointing towards the ground.
  - Use pliers to recap needles.
  - Discard used, bent, burred, or dirty needles.
  - Dispose of needles in an approved and properly labeled sharps container.
  - Report needle stick injuries to management and contact your health care provider if *you* have a needle stick injury.
  - Follow your veterinarian's instructions depending on the health at your farm and know your farm's protocol for changing needles.
- NEVER
  - Put uncapped needles or syringes in your pockets.
  - Reuse needles or attempt to straighten them.
  - Attempt to remove needles from sharps containers.



### **Step 4** Administer injections in the correct location.

- Inject in the neck muscle, behind the ear.
- Do not inject in the ham or loin unless directed by your veterinarian.
- Mark and record the pigs that have been treated or vaccinated to prevent over- or under-medicating, missing treatments or transporting to market before withdrawal time has been completed.
- Improper administration of vaccinations or treatments endangers the health of the pig.



**Step 5** Change needles frequently according to your farm's protocol.

- Always retrieve any dropped needles.
  - Lost needles are sometimes found in the mouth, throat, or feet of pigs.
- Count the number of needles you take into the barn and count the number of needles you take out of the barn. The number should always match.
  - Do not leave used needles in the barn.



### Step 6

**When injecting sows in stalls, the stall itself is the only restraint you need.**

- Be aware of the stall bars.
- Inject the sow and remove the syringe quickly.



### Step 7

**In group sow housing environments, administer injections with or without restraint.**

- Usually it is best to approach the sow from behind and inject quickly into the muscle of the neck without restraining her.
- Keep your knees slightly bent while working in pens.
- Sometimes it may be preferable to isolate a sow in a treatment pen and then administer the injection.



**Step 8** In farrowing barns, pick up the pigs to administer injections.

- If you step in the stall, use caution so you don't slip in feces or placenta.
- Pay attention to the sow, she may be protective of her pigs and might try to bite your hand or arm.
- Squat down to lift the pigs, don't bend at the waist and lift with your back.
- If you are working from outside of the stall, don't lean over the side and reach too far, this can also strain your back.



## Step 9

**In nurseries or wean-to-market barns, use sort boards to crowd pigs.**

- Be mindful of pig movement.
- If you or the pig you are injecting is bumped into, an accidental needle stick might occur.
- Keep your knees slightly bent as you move through the pen.





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**Step 10** When a needle breaks in a pig or a person, follow your farm's protocol.

- Refer to the National Pork Board's *Needle Know-how* resources for further information.



## Step 11 Prevent repetitive motion injury.

- Start your shift with hand and wrist stretches to prepare your muscles for the tasks at hand.
- Job rotation and regular short breaks will allow muscles time to recover from overuse.
- Try to alternate hands and maintain a neutral wrist position.
- Improper lifting, bending or stooping frequently strains the muscles in the back.
  - Always lift with your knees and not your back.
  - Avoid twisting at the waist and hold the animal or other load close to the body.
  - Always allow plenty of time for your body to recover from physically demanding tasks.

