



## **The History of the Syringe: from Glass Tubes to Microneedles**

The thought of having an injection is enough to make many adults and children panic. Needle-phobic individuals should be happy they're not living in ancient times. The Greek word "syrinx," meaning "tube," is the basis for the word syringe. The first syringe was exactly that: a medication-filled tube that was inserted into a cut. It was many centuries later, in the 900s, that Ammar ibn Ali al-Mawsili used the first hypodermic-like tool to remove cataracts via suction.

Early syringes and needles were used to remove fluids from patients. In 1796, things began to change. Edward Jenner, noting that people who came down with cowpox displayed immunity to smallpox, developed a vaccine for the dreaded disease. (The word comes from vacca, Latin for cow.) Even though it was administered through a cut, and not technically an injection, Jenner's discovery revolutionized the practice of medicine.

It wasn't until the 1830s that physicians began to think of syringes as a means of injecting medications into people. Francis Rynd, an Irish doctor, created a hollow needle in 1844. Nine years later, another milestone was reached when Dr. Alexander Woods in Edinburgh and Dr. Charles Gabriel Pravaz of Lyon, France, almost simultaneously developed a hollow-needle syringe. The former used his to administer pain medication while the latter employed the device in aneurism treatment. Fortunately for dental patients, the syringe was in use in dentistry by the end of the 1800s.

1949 brought an innovation that would further revolutionize medical practice. In that year, Arthur E. Smith patented a disposable syringe. Five years later, to enable Jonas Salk's polio vaccine to be widely administered, the first mass-produced single-use syringes were produced. The year after that, the plastic Monoject was launched by Roehr Products.

We've definitely come a long way from those horrific early days. With innovations like microneedles, which are incorporated into a patch and can deliver medication painlessly, the future looks even brighter.

It's been estimated that in the United States, diabetics alone use more than 1 billion syringes a year, and needles are so fine that they are virtually painless. A premier supplier of these devices and their accessories is Bulk Syringes. Whatever an individual's or medical practice's needs, this supplier can fulfill them. From the best-selling 29-point insulin syringe to one with a capacity of

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