

Routes of Administration

Nursing

Speed, bioavailability and the practical trade-off each route brings with it.

Typical patterns. Actual onset varies with formulation and patient.

Route	Onset	Trade-off
Intravenous	Seconds to minutes	No recall; infection risk
Intramuscular	Minutes	Perfusion-dependent; painful
Subcutaneous	Slower, steadier	Small volumes; site rotation
Oral	30–90 minutes	First-pass loss; needs swallowing
Sublingual	Minutes	Bypasses first pass; small doses
Topical or patch	Hours	Steady levels; removal errors

Educational reference. Onset figures are approximate and formulation-dependent. Route substitution is a prescribing decision,