

Starting Insulin? What You Need to Know

There are a variety of insulins available to help manage diabetes. Insulin is injected by pen. Your diabetes team will work with you to determine:

- The number of insulin injections you need per day
- The timing of your insulin injections
- The dose of insulin you need with each injection

Insulin Pens:

Insulin can come in pre-filled pens or cartridges that can be loaded into a reusable pen. Once you have your pens, all you needs is needle tips to ready the pen for injection.

To prime the pen: Once you attach the pen needle, dial up 2-3 units and with the pen tip facing upwards, and push the dosing button. If no stream of insulin appears, repeat this step again.

TIPS FOR USE

Getting Ready

- Check the expiry date on the vial or cartridge before using.
- Check the type of insulin you are using. Humalog, Novorapid, Apidra, Lantus and Levemir should look crystal clear. After rolling to mix, NPH or N insulin should look evenly cloudy.

Injecting

- Your abdomen is the preferred injection site.
- Injecting into muscle (arm or leg) can change the action of the insulin.
- Discard needles and lancets into a sharps container from your pharmacy. They do not go in the garbage.

Storing

- When you get insulin from the pharmacy, put it in your refrigerator right away.
- Keep the insulin you are using at room temperature. Do not let insulin freeze, sit in direct sunlight or get too hot.
- Keep extra insulin in the refrigerator. Use before its expiry date.
- Once opened, a vial or cartridge is good for a month of use.