

Transcript

“Perhaps the most scariest part for me, having to come to the realization that I would have to start injecting insulin, it was more so the fear of the unknown for me.”

When you have gestational diabetes, your diabetes care team may prescribe insulin to help you reach your blood glucose goals. Some women who inject insulin use an insulin pen.

Keep in mind that there are several different pens to choose from and each will have its own special instructions. Work with your diabetes care team to find the pen that works best for you and learn how to use it to make sure you take your prescribed dose.

“Once I was educated it became a little bit easier to deal with so I was able to cope.”

At first glance, the insulin pen looks a lot like a writing pen, but it has a needle instead of a writing point, and an insulin cartridge rather than an ink cartridge.

The following step by step preparation method can be used with most insulin pens.

Gather your supplies. They include: your pen, needle, alcohol swab, and a sharps container.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them.

Pull the outer cap of the pen off.

Wipe the rubber seal at the top with alcohol.

Get the needle and take the protective paper tab off.

Screw the needle onto the pen tightly. You'll notice that it is still in its protective cap.

Remove the outer needle cap.

Take off the inner needle cap.

It is important to prime your pen before each injection to help ensure your proper dose. To prime your pen, dial your pen to deliver 2 units of insulin by turning the dose knob until you see a 2 in the window. Point the pen straight up and push the injection button. You should see insulin come out of the needle tip. Your pen is now primed and you can set your dose.

Turn the knob until your dose appears in the window.

If you're using cloudy insulin, roll the pen between your hands and tip the pen end to end to mix, at least 15 to 20 times.

Now you are ready to inject your insulin.

Insulin should be injected into fatty tissue. The recommended injection areas are: the abdomen or belly, the backs of the arms, the tops or sides of the thigh, and the buttocks or rear.

With some insulins, where you inject on your body can make a difference in how fast the insulin will go to work, or its onset. Work with your diabetes care team to find the injection area that is best for you.

Try to use the same area at the same time every day but you should change the actual injection site each time you inject. This helps keep your skin and underlying tissues healthy. When injecting into your abdomen, make sure to stay 2 inches away from any scar tissue or your navel.

Once you have selected an injection site, wipe the skin with alcohol and wait a few seconds for it to dry. Push the needle in at a 90 degree angle and push the injection button firmly and smoothly.

Depending on the pen you use, you may need to wait five to ten seconds before pulling the pen straight out.

Remove the needle and discard it properly in a “Sharps” container which you can get from your local pharmacy or other supplier of diabetes products. If you don’t have a Sharps container, a heavy plastic bottle with a tight fitting lid clearly labeled that it contains medical waste will work too.

In some areas, you are asked not to put filled sharps containers in your regular trash for collection. Your diabetes care team can tell you if your community has a specific place to take your sharps container when it is full.

If you have any questions about using your insulin pen, contact your Diabetes care team. They can give you tips on how to make injecting your insulin easier. And know that with each injection, you are taking the steps you need for a healthy pregnancy.

“Now I seem like a pro at it. It’s really not too difficult. It’s just part of the routine.”