

DIABETES MEDICATIONS: PREPARING AND INJECTING SINGLE DOSE INSULIN

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Before you prepare to inject your single dose of insulin, let's look more closely at the syringe. Insulin syringes are easier to use than ever before. Their needles are small and sharp to help reduce the pain of injection. The barrel holds the insulin.

The insulin user pushes the plunger to push the insulin out, and the plunger also shows how much insulin is in the syringe.

The needle is sterile and shouldn't touch anything before the injection.

There are different sizes of syringes. Most insulin in the United States is U-100, which means each cc contains 100 units of insulin. To make sure you are using the best size syringe for your insulin dose, talk to your diabetes care team. If you have special needs, such as visual or movement problems, your diabetes care team can introduce you to devices that make it easier to hold the syringe and bottle.

Let's go over, step by step, how to prepare to inject a single dose of one type of insulin or a pre-mixed insulin, using a needle and syringe.

First, gather all of your supplies on a clean surface. This includes the syringe, alcohol swabs, a Sharps container or heavy plastic bottle to put your used syringe in when you are done, and your insulin.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry them on a clean towel.

Clean the top of the insulin bottle with alcohol.

If your insulin is cloudy, mix it thoroughly before use. To mix it, roll the bottle in your hands or rotate it from top to bottom; be careful not to shake it. Turn it over and make sure there is no powder left on the bottom. If your insulin is clear, you do not have to mix it.

Now, pull the plunger in the syringe back to the number of units of insulin you'll need. Inject that air into the insulin bottle.

While the needle is still in the bottle, turn the bottle upside-down. Make sure the needle is covered by insulin. This prevents an air bubble from getting into the syringe. An air bubble is not dangerous, but it takes up space and can cause you to measure the wrong dose.

Pull the plunger back to the correct number of insulin units. If you see an air bubble, push the insulin back into the bottle and fill the syringe again.

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Put the syringe down. Make sure the needle doesn't touch anything. If the needle on your syringe is bent, you must discard it and start again. Now you're ready to inject.

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 most insulins, where you inject on your body can make a difference in how fast the insulin will go to work, or its onset. Generally, the abdomen works fastest, followed by the backs of the arms, the top or outer thigh, and then the buttocks. 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 make sure you 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 two inches away from any scar tissue or your belly button.

If you are about to exercise, be aware that injecting the part of your body that you are going to exercise can cause your insulin to work more quickly. For example, if you inject your leg and then go for a run, your blood glucose level may drop more quickly and go much lower than usual. So, before a strenuous run, you may want to choose a different area and you may need to eat a snack before your run.

Once you have selected an injection site, wipe the skin with alcohol and wait a few seconds for it to dry.

Pick up the syringe and inject at a 90-degree angle. Press the syringe plunger firmly and smoothly. Then pull the needle straight out.

After taking the injection, drop the syringe into a Sharps container, which you can get at your diabetes product supplier. 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.

At your next diabetes care team visit, go over how you prepare and inject your insulin. Your care team may have tips that can make injecting insulin easier.