

# Understanding Insulin

If your body does not produce enough insulin or your body doesn't use the insulin it does produce, your diabetes care team may recommend you take the medication insulin as a part of your plan to manage your diabetes.

*"I, at that point, was afraid of needles. Still am, kind of sort of. So having to mentally wrap my head around giving myself insulin that took me a minute to be ready for."*

Even though you may have been able to manage with healthful diet and activity or oral medications for many years, insulin may be necessary to manage blood glucose now.

Having to take insulin doesn't necessarily mean your diabetes has gotten worse.

And, it doesn't mean your diabetes is more serious than the diabetes of someone who takes pills, or of someone who takes no medication at all.

It just means you need insulin as part of your management plan - to help keep your blood glucose in a healthy range and help you avoid the long-term complications of diabetes.

It may help you to understand how insulin works.

Diabetes affects the way your body uses the food you eat.

Most of the food you eat changes to glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose enters the bloodstream causing your blood glucose level to rise.

As your blood glucose rises, the pancreas releases insulin. Insulin works like a key to open the cells and let glucose enter. The glucose is used for energy now or stored for later use.

In people who *don't* have diabetes, the body maintains a balance of glucose and insulin in the bloodstream by releasing the right amount of insulin at the right time.

But when you have diabetes, your body can't keep your blood glucose in this healthy range without help.

The exact cause of diabetes varies from person to person but it may be because your body does not make enough insulin or it doesn't use insulin properly.

If that's the case, you may be prescribed insulin to keep your blood glucose in a healthy range.

No matter if you use an insulin pen, or have an insulin pump, take your insulin as directed to manage your diabetes and reduce the complications that can result from having high blood glucose over a period of time.

Although Diabetes is complex, it's manageable when you have the right information and support. Diabetes educators are trained to be your diabetes expert and can help you learn how to successfully thrive with diabetes. You deserve nothing less!

Ask your provider for a referral today! Find one at [www.DiabetesEducator.org/find](http://www.DiabetesEducator.org/find).