

# How to Use an Insulin Pen

Using an insulin pen is a convenient way to give yourself insulin injections. This video covers the steps for using an insulin pen. But before we get started, it's important to remember that there are lots of insulin pen options.

Most pens work in a similar way, but each pen can have some small differences. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with your pen. Each time you use your insulin pen, start by looking it over.

Check the label to make sure you are using the correct pen. And remember to check the expiration date on the pen. Don't use your pen past its expiration date. First, remove the cap from the pen.

And make sure the insulin looks like it is supposed to. Don't use a pen if the insulin doesn't look right. If you are using cloudy insulin, called NPH, you'll need to mix the insulin every time before you use it.

Roll the pen between your hands, or tip it gently back and forth. But don't shake it. Do this until the white powder has dissolved, and the solution is mixed. If you use clear insulin, you don't need to mix it.

Next, attach the needle to the pen. It's a good idea to use a new needle each time you use your pen. This can help prevent blocked needles and insulin contamination. And it can make the shot more comfortable.

After you've attached the needle to the pen, you'll prime the needle. This removes any air from the needle and insulin cartridge and helps you get the full insulin dose. To prime the needle, you turn the dose selector dial to the number of units that your pen recommends for priming. Then hold the pen with the needle pointing up, and gently tap the insulin cartridge to move any air bubbles to the top.

Next, push the pen's injection button in all the way. Watch for insulin to come out of the needle. It might come out in a stream, or it might be in droplets. You may need to repeat this process several times when using a new pen or new insulin cartridge.

After you have primed your pen, it's time to select your insulin dose. Start by making sure that the dose selector dial is at zero. Then turn the dose selector dial until you see the number of insulin units you need in the pen's dose window.

Next you'll prepare your injection site. If you use alcohol to clean your skin, let it dry before you give the injection. To give the insulin, hold the pen at a 90-degree angle at the injection site, and gently push the needle into your skin.

Then press the pen injection button in until it stops. Keep the needle in your skin while you hold the injection button for as many seconds as your pen's manufacturer recommends. Then release the button, and remove the needle from your skin.

Remember, don't rub the injection area. Now remove the needle from your pen. Dispose of the needle safely by putting it in a hard plastic sharps container.

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Then recap your pen. Be sure to store the pen at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, until your next use. Learning to use an insulin pen may take a little practice.

But before long, you'll be using your insulin pen with confidence. And remember, you can always talk with your doctor or diabetes educator if you have any questions.