

Learning About Insulin Pens

For lots of people who have diabetes, using insulin is an important part of managing their blood sugar.

And if you use insulin, it can be helpful to know that there are options for how you give yourself injections. One option is an insulin pen.

An insulin pen is a device that can replace using insulin bottles and syringes.

There are many different types of insulin pens.

Each pen is designed to be used with a specific brand and type of insulin. Most pens work in a similar way.

But there can be some differences between brands—and even models—of pens.

So it's important to always follow the instructions that come with your pen.

Now let's start with the basics.

This is the pen.

The pen has a removable cap, and under the cap is the end where you attach the disposable needle.

Here's the part of the pen that holds the insulin.

This is called the insulin cartridge.

This dial is how you select the amount of insulin you need.

And this is the button you press to give yourself the insulin.

Some insulin pens are disposable, and some are reusable.

Disposable pens come prefilled with insulin.

When the insulin is used up or expires, you throw the entire pen away.

You use a new pen the next time you need insulin.

With a reusable pen, you don't throw the pen away.

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When the insulin is used up or expired, you remove the empty insulin cartridge, and insert a new one into the pen.

Many people choose to use insulin pens because they are convenient.

When you use a pen, you don't need to carry insulin bottles and syringes everywhere you go. You just bring your pen along.

Insulin pens fit in a pocket or a bag so they're easy to carry and use without being very noticeable.

Some people find that this can help them feel more comfortable using insulin in public.

Insulin pens also may be more accurate.

This is because when you draw insulin into a syringe, you must carefully measure so that you don't get too much or too little.

But with a pen, you turn a dial to select the amount of insulin you want.

Many pens have features that can also make it easier to manage your injections.

Some pens have a digital display that shows you how long it's been since your last shot and what dose you used last.

Other pens are made to pair with smartphone apps that help you track how much insulin is left in your pen, calculate your insulin doses, and remind you when it's time for your next dose.

Some people also find that insulin pens are more comfortable to use than a syringe because pens often have shorter and thinner needles.

Pens may also work better for people who don't see well or who have problems like arthritis that make it harder to use a syringe. There are a lot of things to think about when you use insulin.

An insulin pen is just one tool that may make it a little easier. And remember, you can always talk to your doctor or diabetes educator if you have any questions.