

Using Insulin at Home: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Endocrine (Diabetes, Thyroid)

Insulin lowers your blood sugar. Using it the right way and at the right time keeps your sugar in a safe range.

Know your insulin

- Mealtime (rapid-acting) insulin works fast. Take it within 15 minutes before you eat, then eat.
- Long-acting insulin works all day. Take it once a day at the same time.
- My insulins and doses: _____.

Use your pen

- Wash your hands. Check the name and date. Put on a new needle.
- Prime: dial 2 units, point the needle up, and press until a drop appears.
- Dial your dose. Push the needle straight in.
- Press the button all the way. Count to 10, then pull out.
- **Never share your pen, even with a new needle.**

Change your spot

- Use your belly, thighs, or the back of your upper arms.
- Move each shot about 1 inch from the last one.

Store it safely

- Keep unopened insulin in the refrigerator. Never freeze it.
- Keep the pen you are using at room temperature. Throw it out after the number of days on the label.

- Put used needles in a sharps container or a hard plastic bottle with a tight lid.

Check and treat low sugar

- Check before meals and at bedtime.
- Low sugar (under 70): shaky, sweaty, fast heartbeat, hungry, or confused.
- Take 15 g of fast sugar, such as 4 oz of juice. Recheck in 15 minutes.
- When sick, keep taking long-acting insulin unless told not to.

Call your provider today if you have

- Low blood sugar more than once
- Blood sugar over 300 mg/dL two times in a row
- Vomiting, or you cannot eat while sick

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Passing out or a seizure
- Trouble swallowing: family gives glucagon
- Very high sugar with vomiting, fast breathing, or fruity breath

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclxpath.com/patient-education/insulin-at-home/patient

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