Tips for Giving Yourself an Insulin Injection

by BRENDA VANTA

How to Inject Insulin

Living with type 1 diabetes means you have to rely on insulin injections for the long term, usually for a lifetime. The more you know about the drug and how to take the shots, the easier will be for you to manage this treatment, so you can enjoy life more. Let's take a look at how to inject insulin.

When You Start the Insulin Therapy

Understand how to inject insulin. Insulin pens and pumps come with an instruction booklet that contains a detailed description of how to use it, how to store insulin when you need to change or replace the device, and more. In some cases, you will need to mix different types of insulin. You need to carefully monitor the dosage for insulin pens.

How to Inject Insulin

1. Check the insulin flow and how many units you need to take, carefully.
2. Insert the pen needle into the skin at about a 90-degree angle.
3. Push until you see the line “0,” so all the dose is injected into your body.
4. Wait a few seconds until you remove the needle
5. Gently push it out.

Where to Inject Insulin: Insulin Injection Sites

Insulin can easily irritate the skin and subcutaneous tissues and cause lumps and infections if you take the shots in the same place. Make sure you rotate where you give yourself the shots.

The best spots are in the abdomen area about 10-15 cm from the belly button. It is easy to give yourself the shot and it is absorbed quickly. One day you can use the right side and the next day the left side of the abdomen.

Buttocks and thighs areas can also be used, although the insulin is absorbed slower and the absorption can also be influenced by physical exercise.

The outer part of the arms is another place where you can take the shots and the insulin is absorbed quickly. It may be not so easy for you to reach the outer arm spot and you might also feel a little bit of pain.

Monitoring Insulin Dosage

As the disease progresses, the need for a certain dose or type of insulin may also change. The doctor will adjust the treatment based on your blood sugar levels and other lab tests.

The most common types of insulin are rapid-acting analogs, short-acting, intermediate-acting, and long-acting analogs. In some cases, you already get a combined mixture of two forms of insulin.

Each form of insulin has different peak levels, keeps your blood sugar in control for specific periods, and is given at specific times (and about your meals). Ask the doctor or pharmacist to get a better understanding of how to use your insulin therapy.

How to Store Insulin Pens Properly

Insulin is sensitive to temperature, and sun exposure and has a limited shelf life. You should keep unopened insulin cartridges in the fridge (not the freezer), at about 2-8 degrees Celsius.

The pen you use can be kept at room temperature for up to a month, but keep it away from direct heat or light. Never use this drug after its expiry date.