

Taking Insulin for Diabetes During Pregnancy

Things to know about your insulin

Storage

Store unopened insulin pens in the refrigerator. Avoid exposing your insulin to extreme temperatures (hot or cold) and direct sunlight. NEVER leave your supplies in a vehicle. Be careful to not let your insulin freeze.

After the insulin pen is used for the first time, it can be safely stored at room temperature, but only for a specific time. Most pens can be kept for about 28 to 31 days, but some can be safely kept longer. **Always check with your pharmacist to know when the pen should be thrown away.**

The following medicines in pens are only good for **14 days** at room temperature:

- Humulin N pen
- Novolin N pen

Types of Insulin

- **Rapid acting (meal time): Admelog, Fiasp, Humalog, Lyumjev, and Novolog.** This insulin is **clear**. Take your insulin within 5 to 10 minutes of eating. Fiasp and Lyumjev may be taken up to 20 minutes after eating.

We recommend that you:

1. Get your insulin pen injection prepared.
2. Plate your meal.
3. Inject your insulin.
4. Then eat right away.

Do not take your meal time (clear) insulin if you are not able to eat. **Call our office for instructions if needed.**

- **Short acting: Regular (Humulin R, Novolin R).** Take your insulin 30 to 45 minutes before eating.
- **Intermediate acting: NPH (Humulin N, Novolin N).** This insulin is **cloudy** and needs mixed. Take your insulin 1 or 2 times a day as directed in the morning and/or at bedtime. This insulin is not food dependent. Its effect is slower.
- **Long acting (basal): Basaglar, Lantus, Rezvoglar, Semglee, and Toujeo.** This insulin works for about 24 hours. Take your insulin at about the same time every day.

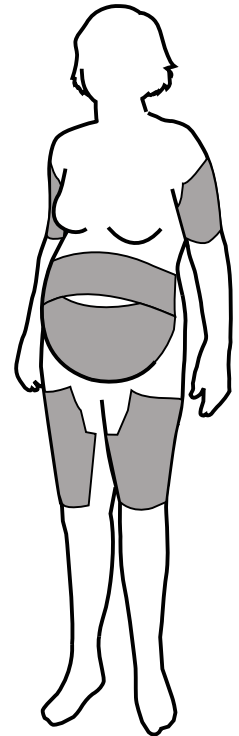
How to give yourself insulin

Get Ready

1. Select a site for your injection on an area of the body.

Give your insulin in the same area for 7 to 10 days before changing to a new place. Use a site about an inch away from the last site or from one side of the body area to the other for the next injection. Avoid your belly button by 2 inches.

Insulin is absorbed differently throughout your body. Fastest absorption is in your abdomen followed by arms, thighs, and upper buttocks.



2. Gather your supplies:

- Insulin pen
- Pen needle
- Alcohol pad
- Sharps disposal container

3. Wash your hands well with soap and water.

Follow These Safety Tips

NEVER reuse pen needles and NEVER leave pen needles attached to the pen. This can cause an increased risk of infection and irritation at the site of injection.

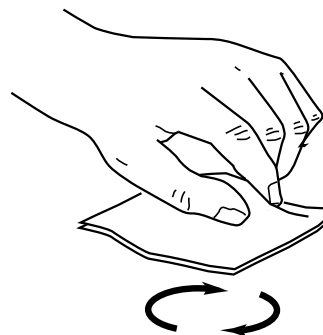
Keep at least a week's worth of supplies on hand at all times.

Give Yourself Insulin

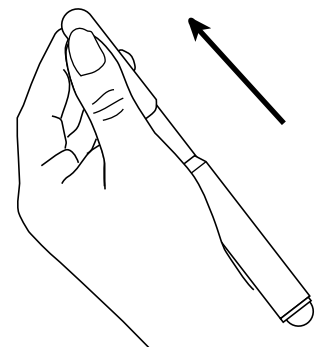
To learn how to give yourself insulin, watch the video “How to Use an Insulin Pen” by visiting go.osu.edu/acm0228 or by scanning this QR code. You may also follow these steps:



1. Clean the area with an alcohol pad using a circular motion. Let the alcohol air dry.

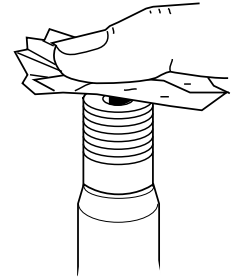


2. Remove the cover from the pen. You will be able to see the insulin in the pen.



3. **If you are using a cloudy insulin (NPH),** gently roll the pen between your hands or turn it up and down to mix the insulin.

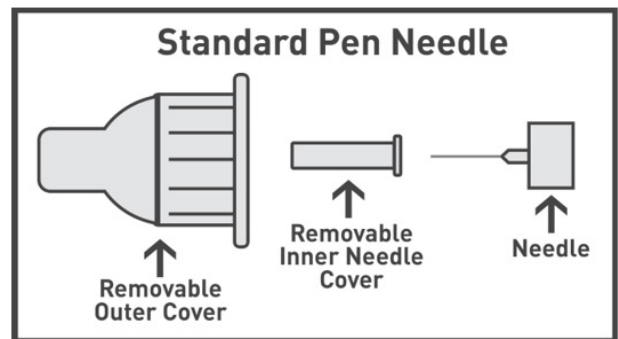
4. Clean the end of the pen with an alcohol pad where the needle twists on.



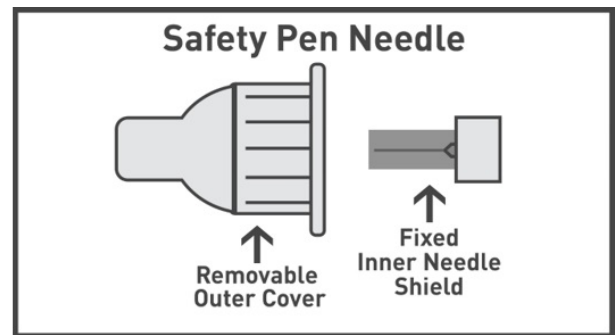
5. Attach a new needle by peeling back the paper cover and screwing it onto the pen. It should be snug but not too tight.

6. Prepare the pen needle:

- **If you are using a standard pen needle, remove both the outer cover and inner needle cover,** so you can see the needle.



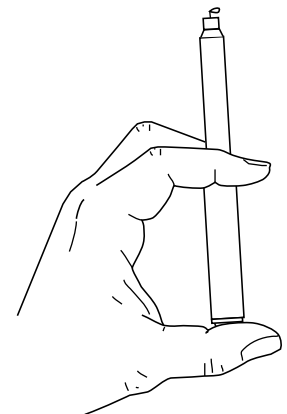
- **If you are using a safety pen needle, remove the outer cover only.** The inner needle shield stays in place. Most often these are the type of needle used in hospitals.



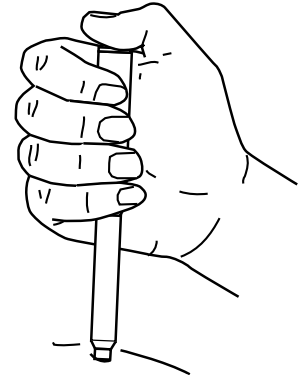
Ask your pharmacist, nurse, or diabetes educator if you have questions about this or check the manufacturer's instructions for more information.

7. Clear the air out of the pen or prime the pen.

- Turn the knob dose dial to 2 units.
- Hold the pen with the needle up in the air and push the dial knob in. Watch the tip of the needle for a drop of insulin.
- You may need to repeat the dialing to 2 units and push a few times until you see the drop on the needle, so you know you have no air in the pen.
- Dial in your insulin dose by turning the knob clockwise until you see the right number for your dose.



8. Put the needle straight into the skin at a 90-degree angle in a quick motion. Push the needle all the way into the skin.
9. Using your thumb, push the knob down slowly to inject the insulin. Hold the needle in place for a count of 10 before removing. Check that the pen is back to zero, and then pull out the needle.
10. Check the area for any redness, bleeding, or bruising.
11. Remove the needle from the pen, using the big clear cap to unscrew it. Throw it into your Sharps disposal container.
12. Put the cover back on your insulin pen.



Low blood sugar

General Tips

- Follow your meal plan of 3 meals and 3 snacks each day to prevent low blood sugar.
- Buy glucose tablets from your pharmacy to treat low blood sugar.
- Have your testing supplies, your glucose tablets, and 2 to 3 snacks with you at all times.

Signs of Low Blood Sugar

Signs may be noticed by others before you notice them. Signs include:

- Feeling shaky
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed
- A fast heartbeat
- Feeling moody or grumpy
- Feeling weak or tired
- Numbness around mouth or lips
- Being unable to speak
- Feeling hungry
- Feeling nervous
- A headache
- Blurred vision
- Not thinking clearly
- Sweating

If you have these signs or think your blood sugar is low:

Check your blood sugar level and write down the number in your blood sugar record to share with your healthcare provider.

- **If your blood sugar is 50 to 60, eat or drink some food with sugar (15 grams of carbs), such as:**
 - › Chew 3 glucose tablets or 1 package of oral glucose gel
 - › 1 tablespoon of sugar
 - › ½ cup (4 ounces) of juice or regular soda (not diet)
 - › 3 squares of graham crackers
 - › 2 teaspoons of honey or syrup
 - › 5 to 6 mini jelly beans
 - › 2 to 3 gumdrop candies or regular size jelly beans

- **Wait 15 minutes and check your blood sugar.** If your blood sugar is still less than 60, or if you are not feeling better, eat or drink another serving of food or drink from the list.
- **Wait another 15 minutes and recheck your blood sugar.**
 - **If your blood sugar is 40 to 50**, eat or drink 30 grams or 2 servings of carbohydrate from the list. Wait 15 minutes and recheck your blood sugar. If your blood sugar is still less than 60, or if you are not feeling better, eat or drink another serving of food or drink from the list. Continue to recheck your blood sugar every 15 minutes until it is in the normal range.
 - **If your blood sugar is below 40**, act quickly. Use instant glucose gel from the pharmacy. Wait 15 minutes and recheck your blood sugar. If your blood sugar is still less than 60, or if you are not feeling better, eat or drink a serving of food or drink from the list. Continue to recheck your blood sugar every 15 minutes until it is in the normal range.
 - **If you check your blood sugar and it is 60 or more and you are still not feeling better, call 911.** It may not be a problem with your blood sugar and you may need more help.
- **Be careful not to over treat.** If you panic and start to eat or drink until you feel better, your blood sugar may go too high.
- **When your blood sugar has returned to normal**, eat a meal or snack with complex carbohydrates and protein foods to prevent future low blood sugar levels.
- **Call your provider if you have low blood sugar more than 2 times in a week.**

This resource is for informational purposes only. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions about your care. For more education, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.