

INS and OUTS of INSULIN



Insulin remains a mainstay in the management of blood glucose in diabetes. As a diabetic, it is important to know the differences between various types of insulin in order to optimize therapy.

Two common types of insulin include long-acting insulin and fast-acting insulin. Long-



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acting insulin, or “basal” insulin, helps maintain blood sugar levels throughout the day. These medications include Lantus and Levemir insulin. Fast-acting insulin, or “bolus” insulin, helps

control blood sugar levels right after having a meal. A few of these medications are Humalog, Novolog and Apidra. There is a constant challenge to inject the right amount of insulin to mimic the body’s basal and bolus needs.

Insulin is a delicate substance that needs to be handled with care. Here are some tips that will help you become more confident in managing your therapy.

Avoid the Lows

Hypoglycemia is a medical term for when your blood sugar is too low. It is defined as less than 70mg/dL. It indicates a point at which there is very little fuel for your brain to function properly and your body begins to feel uncomfortable. While extreme cases of “insulin shock” don’t occur very often, it is important to know that these symptoms of shakiness and nervousness are your body’s way of telling you to ingest some sugar right away!

Keep your Insulin Safe

Insulin should be properly stored in a refrigerator to keep fresh unless it is in use. Move over the carton of eggs and designate space for your vials and pens. Store the vials in some kind of padding to prevent the glass from easily breaking. An excellent option for carrying insulin and keeping it at even temperatures is an insulin cooling case.

Maximize Comfort

A great tip on maximizing comfort is to allow the vial or pen to come to room temperature before injecting

the insulin. Read the label and choose an injection site that the manufacturer has recommended. Make sure to rotate within the general area to decrease any skin damage. A good rule of thumb is to inject at least one inch away from the site used before.

Safety First

In order to obtain the maximum effectiveness of insulin, it should be properly injected. Use a new needle with each injection. Reusing old needles can increase the chance of skin damage and infection. Wipe the skin with an alcohol swab and let it dry before injecting the insulin. Lastly, dispose of the needle in an appropriate Sharps container.

Ready, Set, Go

Insulin use requires that the proper dosage is dialed or drawn up before injecting. Perform any priming that is recommended by the manufacturer. Pinch the skin before injecting if the needle is greater than 6mm to avoid hitting the muscle.

MeridianComplete is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Michigan Medicaid to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees.

