

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. Do not use insulin that has been frozen.

After the insulin pen is used for the first time, it can be safely stored at room temperature for a limited time noted below.

- 28 days for Humalog, Novolog, Admelog, Lyumjev, Lantus, Basaglar, and Semglee.
- 42 days for Levemir
- 14 days for NPH.

Types of insulin

- **Rapid acting (meal time):** Humalog, Novolog, Admelog or Lyumjev. This insulin is **clear**.
- Inject Lyumjev under your skin at the beginning of a meal or within 20 minutes after you start eating a meal.
- Inject Humalog under your skin within 15 minutes before or right after you eat a meal.

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

- **Intermediate acting:** NPH (Humulin 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:** Levemir, Lantus, Basaglar, or Semglee. This insulin works for about 24 hours. Take your insulin at about the same time every day.

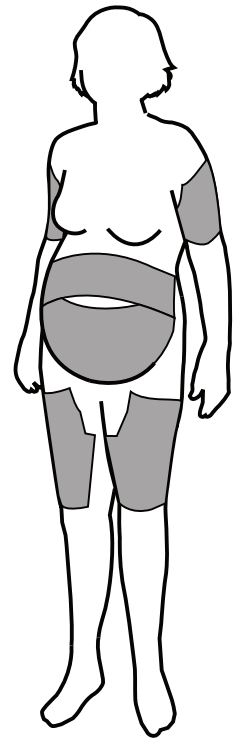
Getting ready

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

Insulin is absorbed differently throughout your body. **The best site is in your abdomen.** You will not harm the baby. Avoid your belly button by two inches.

You may also use the arms, thighs and upper buttocks.

Rotate sites with each injection by staying at least one inch from your last injection.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

wexnermedical.osu.edu

2. Gather your supplies:

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

3. Wash your hands well with soap and water.

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.

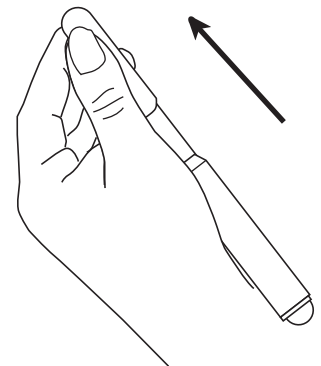
Keep at least a week's worth of supplies on hand at all times.

Giving insulin

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

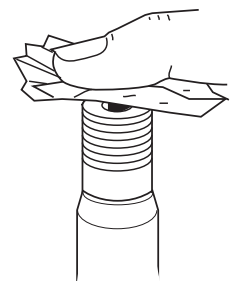


2. Remove the cover from the pen. You will be able to see the insulin in the pen.



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.

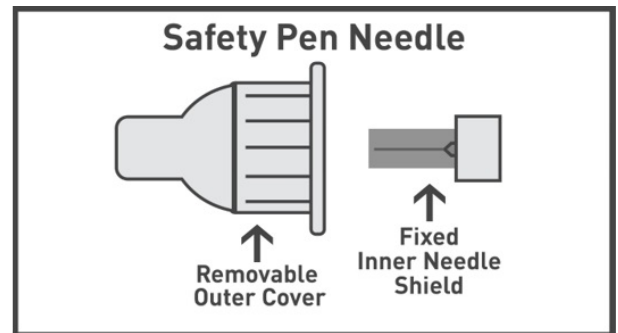
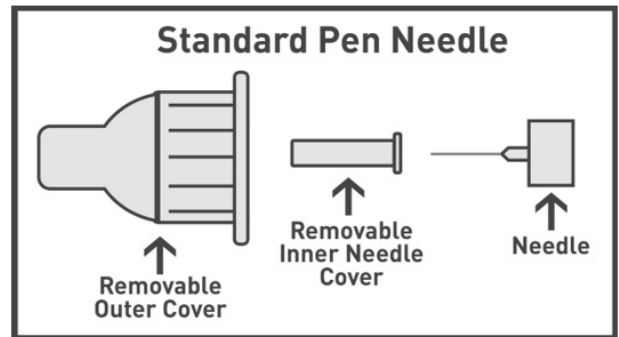
4. Clean the end of the pen with an alcohol pad where the needle twists on.



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:

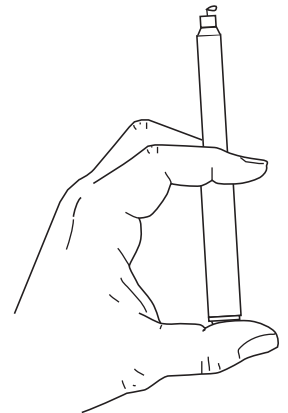
- If you are using a **standard pen needle**, remove **both the outer cover and inner needle cover**, so you can see the needle.
- If you are using a **safety pen needle**, remove the **outer cover only**. The inner needle shield stays in place. Most often these are the type of needle used in hospitals.



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.



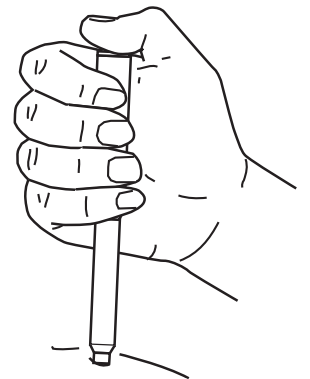
8. Put the needle straight into the skin at a 90-degree angle in a quick motion. Push the needle all the way into the skin.

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

- The signs of low blood sugar are sweating, shaking, dizziness, moodiness, confusion or being very hungry (hangry).

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 doctor.
- **If your blood sugar is 69 mg/dl or lower, eat 15 grams of carbohydrates.** Wait 15 minutes and recheck your blood sugar. Examples of 15 grams of carbs include: 3 glucose tablets, 1 cup of milk, 4 peanut butter or cheese crackers, and ½ cup of juice or soda.
- After you treat your low blood sugar, eat a snack or meal that includes a serving of protein.
- **Call your diabetes nurse if you have 2 or more low blood sugars in one week or any low requiring assistance.**

INSULIN PEN USE VIDEO - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q1n7DOdMdw>

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.

DRIVING SAFETY FOR DIABETES

Always eat prior to driving. This should include a carbohydrate and protein source.

Always check your blood sugar prior to driving. You should not drive if your blood sugar is below 80 mg/dl.

You should not drive if you are not feeling well. If you begin to feel ill while you are driving, pull over to determine what is causing you to feel ill. The cause could be a blood sugar abnormality or an issue unrelated to your diabetes.

Always carry your glucometer, testing supplies, and 2-3 snacks with you when you are away from home.

We recommend all patients using a hypoglycemic agent (insulin or glyburide), carry glucose tablets with them at all times.