

Using an Insulin Pen

Your health care provider may recommend that you inject insulin using an insulin pen to help control your blood sugar level. Injecting insulin with a pen involves: choosing an injection site, preparing and priming your pen and injecting the insulin into your body. Your health care provider will tell you what type of insulin you need, as well as when and how much you need to inject.

Things You Will Need:

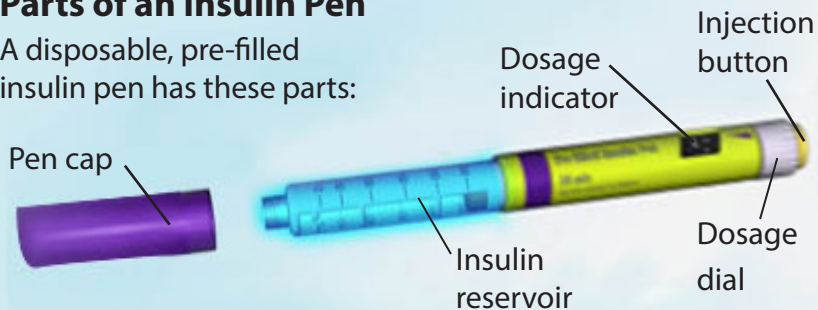
- Alcohol wipes
- Insulin pen
- A new pen needle
- Sharps disposal container

Types of Insulin Pens

Most pens are disposable with pre-filled insulin. When the insulin runs out, you throw the pen away. Some pens are reusable and have an insulin cartridge that you load into the pen. Follow the instructions that came with your pen.

Parts of an Insulin Pen

A disposable, pre-filled insulin pen has these parts:



Insulin pen needles have a protective pull-tab and an outer and inner needle cap.



Selecting Your Injection Site

The areas for insulin injection include: the abdomen or belly, upper arms, the thighs, and the buttocks.



When selecting your injection site:

- Use a different spot each time you give yourself an injection.
- Choose a spot at least one inch away from your last injection site and any scar or mole.
- Inject your insulin at least two inches from your belly button.

Preparing Your Insulin Pen

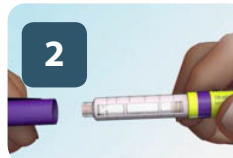
Step 1

Wash your hands with soap and water and then dry them.



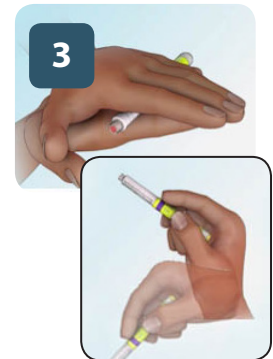
Step 2

Remove the cap from your pen.



Step 3

If your insulin needs to be mixed, gently roll the pen between your hands. Then turn your pen up and down ten times.



Do not shake your pen. It may cause bubbles to form in your insulin.

Preparing Your Insulin Pen Continued...



Before injecting yourself, make sure the insulin in your pen is:

- The type your doctor prescribed.
- Not past the expiration date.
- Free of clumps.

Step 4

Use an alcohol wipe to clean the end of the pen where the needle attaches.

Step 5

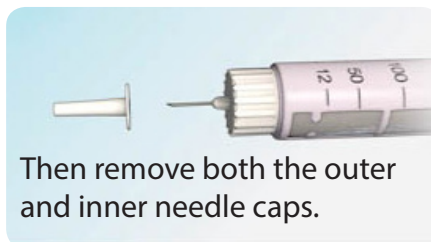
Remove the pull-tab from the needle.



Be sure to use a new needle each time you inject insulin.

Step 6

With the outer and inner needle caps still in place, use the instructions to attach the needle to your pen.



Then remove both the outer and inner needle caps.



Do not:

- Touch the needle.
- Allow it to touch any surface.
- Use the needle if it is bent.

Priming Your Insulin Pen

It is important to prime the pen before injecting your insulin.

Priming the pen:

- Replaces the air in the needle with insulin and removes any clogs or blockages.
- Ensures that you receive all of the insulin you intend to inject.

Step 7

Turn the dosage dial until you see two units displayed in the dosage indicator.



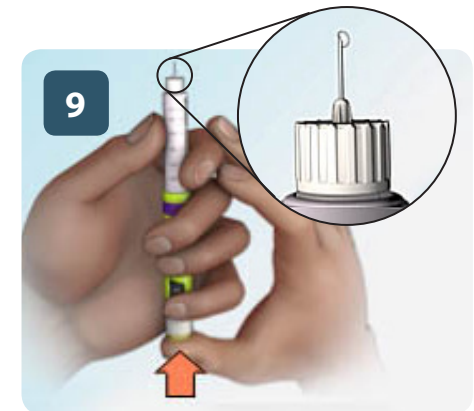
Step 8

- Hold the pen with the needle pointing up.
- Gently tap the end of the pen near the needle two or three times.



Step 9

- Press the injection button all the way in until a drop of insulin appears on the tip of the needle.
- You may need to repeat these steps before seeing insulin appear on the tip of the needle.



If you need to set your pen down, make sure the needle does not touch anything.

Injecting the Insulin

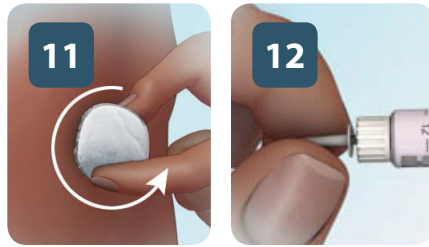
Step 10

Turn the dosage dial to the number of insulin units you need to inject.



Step 11

Clean your injection site with an alcohol wipe. Use a circular motion to clean a spot about two inches wide.



Step 12

If you replaced your pen's inner needle cap, remove it now.

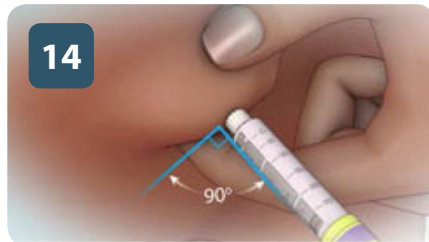


Step 13

Pinch a two-inch fold of skin in the cleaned injection spot.

Step 14

Quickly insert the pen's needle straight into your skin at a ninety-degree angle. Make sure the whole needle enters your skin.



Step 15

- Push the pen's injection button all the way down to inject the insulin into the fat tissue beneath your skin.
- Slowly count to ten before removing the needle to make sure you have injected all of the insulin.

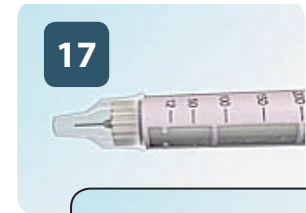


Step 16

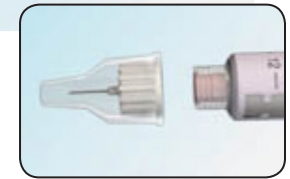
Pull the needle straight out to remove it.

Step 17

Carefully put the outer cap back onto the needle. Then turn the capped needle to remove it from the pen. Make sure you remove the needle after each injection.



Never store your insulin pen with the needle attached.

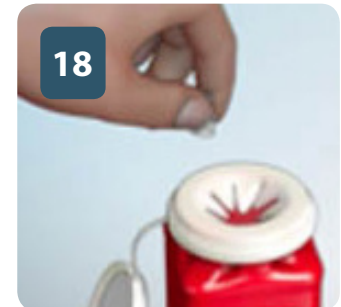


Step 18

Throw away the needle into your sharps disposal container.



Never throw your needles directly into the trash.



Contact your health care provider if:

- You have questions about injecting your insulin.
- Your blood sugar level stays above or below your target range.

Watch online at:

GMCmanagingdiabetes.com

This handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your health care provider. This information should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your health care provider with questions or concerns.