



Diabetes Education

Knowing *HOW* to properly give yourself injections is only part of making injections **LESS** painful. Other steps such as making sure the syringe is properly prepared and using sterile technique to decrease your risk of infection are also important steps in helping make injections **LESS** painful.



Before You Start:

- ✓ **KEEP** your supplies together in a small container or bag, or in the same place. What you will need: insulin syringe, insulin bottle (or bottles, if mixing two insulins) and alcohol wipes.
- ✓ **CHECK** the insulin bottle and make sure it is the right insulin. When you first open an insulin bottle, write the date on it. After 30 days, get rid of any remaining insulin because it loses its effectiveness after this time.

Injecting Insulin

Getting Started:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water, dry them thoroughly. Take the bottle of insulin between your hands and roll (*not shake*) it gently back and forth to thoroughly mix the contents. This is especially important for the cloudy insulins.
2. **OPEN** an alcohol wipe and swab the top of the insulin bottle. If the bottle has not been opened yet, remove the protective cover. It usually will pop off with a little upward pressure.
3. Pick up your syringe in one hand, and with the other hand, grasp the needle cap firmly between your thumb and forefinger. Pull the cap straight off without touching the needle.

Preparing the Syringe:

4. Make note of how many units of insulin you'll be injecting. Pull the plunger of the syringe back and draw air into the syringe to the same amount of units. Insert the needle into the rubber stopper of the insulin bottle and push the plunger to inject the air into the bottle.
5. Leave the needle in the bottle, turn the bottle upside down and make sure the tip of the needle is below the surface of the insulin. Pull back again on the plunger to fill the syringe to slightly **MORE** than the number of units needed.
6. If you notice air bubbles trapped in the syringe, **TAP** the syringe gently with a fingernail to dislodge the bubbles and so they float to the top. Push the air bubbles back into the bottle and pull back again to fill the syringe to the correct amount of insulin. Take the needle out of the bottle.



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Injecting Insulin TIPS:

- ✓ Some people reuse their syringes to cut down on costs, but there are good reasons not to do this. Once you use a syringe, it is not sterile anymore and your risk of skin infections from using a contaminated needle increase. It is also not wise to use alcohol to clean the used needle, because this strips the silicone coating off the needle, making it more painful and irritating to the site.
- ✓ Never share syringes. Diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis are spread through blood to blood contact and sharing syringes places you at risk.
- ✓ If you feel any signs or symptoms of hypoglycemia, check your blood sugar between 1 to 2 hours after giving yourself the injection.

Injecting Insulin

Choosing the Injection Site:

7. Choose the site of the injection. Make sure that you are rotating the site, so that you're not always using the same spot. This will **PREVENT** your skin from becoming tough and uneven.
8. Rotate injection sites by choosing one spot and moving over a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in one direction away from the site. When you have run out of surface area in that direction, estimate the original injection site and move over a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the opposite direction. Do not rotate sites by switching left and right sides. It is more difficult to keep track of the original injection site.
9. Open another alcohol wipe or use the one you used on the insulin bottle if it is not dry yet. Clean the site in a circular motion. Let the skin dry before you proceed which takes only takes a minute or two. Try to relax the muscle around the injection site area. Relaxing the muscles around the site area will make the injection less painful.

Ready, Set, Go:

10. Take the skin between your forefinger and thumb and pinch gently. With the other hand, take the syringe and place the needle at a 90 degree angle with the site. For individuals who are thin or children, a 45 degree angle to the site is preferred. *GENTLY* push the needle into the skin all the way to the hub of the needle. It is important to push the plunger all the way in to inject all of the insulin into the fatty tissue.
11. When taking out the needle make sure you draw it out at the same angle that you put it in so the site is not traumatized. If the site is bleeding, you can apply pressure on the site with the alcohol wipe. It should stop bleeding in a few seconds.
12. Carefully place the cap back on the needle taking care not to stick yourself. Discard the syringe in a sharps container or use an empty laundry detergent bottle with a screwtop lid. There are many community drop off points that will take your properly stored used syringes. Usually pharmacies or hospitals will be happy to dispose of them for you.
13. Put the insulin back in the fridge, and put **ALL** your supplies in your specially designated place for the next time.



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