

# Insulin in type 2 diabetes

Insulin is a hormone made by the body. It helps keep blood glucose at normal levels. People with type 2 diabetes do not have enough insulin or it does not work very well. People with type 1 diabetes do not make any insulin at all. Injecting insulin replaces or tops up what your body would normally produce.

## Starting insulin

Insulin is given by injection, into the fatty layer of the abdomen. Your doctor or diabetes educator will discuss the type of insulin and best times to inject. Don't forget to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles that you have started insulin.

## Equipment

There are a range of syringes and insulin devices (eg pens) that can make injecting easier.

**Syringes** – come in different sizes depending on your needs.

**Insulin pens/devices** – are reusable (with an insulin cartridge that can be changed) or disposable.

**Pen needles** – come in different sizes based on your need and preference.

## Disposal of syringes and needle

Used syringes and pen needles must be disposed of safely. Discard the syringe/pen needle into **an approved yellow sharps container or a puncture proof (strong plastic) container** with a lid. Never place used syringes into household garbage or leave unattended. Contact your local council, Diabetes Australia office, local pharmacy or local diabetes centre for container purchase and drop off locations.

## Storage of insulin

**Unopened** - store in fridge until the expiry date (do not freeze).

**Opened (in use)** - store at room temperature (not in fridge) and away from direct sunlight for up to 28 days.

Insulin is damaged by heat so store in a cool place if temperature exceeds 25°. Return expired or unwanted insulin to your pharmacy for safe disposal. Insulin should not be put in the rubbish as this can be dangerous to both humans and the environment.

## Supply of insulin

You need a prescription from your doctor to obtain insulin. Always check that the pharmacy and doctor have given you the correct type of insulin. Check the type and expiry date before leaving the pharmacy. Keep at least 3 days worth of insulin on hand to reduce risk of running out un-expectedly.

## Supply of syringes/needles

Register with the National Diabetes Services Scheme so you can access free syringes and/or pen needles. You can get registration forms from your local doctor, diabetes service, some pharmacies or Diabetes Australia office.

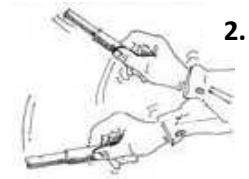


## Giving the injection

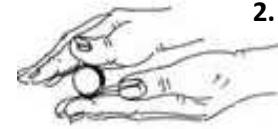
It is important that you get education about self-injecting insulin. Your local diabetes service can give you advice and answer your questions. Below are some points to help when injecting insulin.

For an insulin device follow these steps:

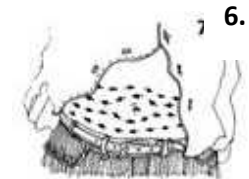
1. wash your hands
2. mix cloudy insulin by rocking the device back and forwards (10-20 times), end to end and rolling between your hands. Discard cartridge if any signs of clumping or yellowing
3. use a new needle each time you inject
4. dial up 2-4 units and push the plunger to expel any air in the needle – look for a stream of insulin
5. dial up your dose of insulin
6. use a different spot with each injection
7. pinch up an area on your abdomen
8. put needle into pinched up area at 90° - straight in, not at an angle
9. inject insulin and hold for 5-10 seconds depending on the dose of insulin (the higher the dose, the longer the needle needs to stay in)
10. withdraw the needle
11. let go of the pinched up area
12. dispose of the needle safely.



2.



2.



6.



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## My insulin

Name	Dose	Time & instruction
eg Humulin NPH	20	Before bedtime

Drop off point for sharps is:

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## For more information

**Diabetes Outreach  
Country Health SA**  
8 Woodville Rd  
Woodville South SA 5011  
Telephone: (08) 8222 6775  
[www.diabetesoutreach.org.au](http://www.diabetesoutreach.org.au)

