

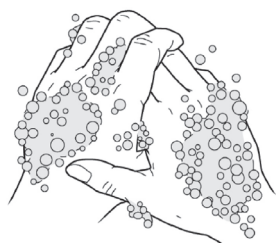


# DIABETES CARE

## How to Give an Insulin Injection

To control your diabetes you may need to take insulin. Insulin can only be given by injections, also called shots. Your doctor will tell you how much insulin to take and how often to take it.

### Getting Ready



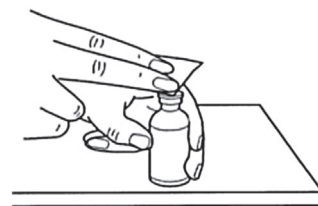
- 1 Gather the needed supplies:
  - Insulin
  - Insulin syringe
  - Alcohol pad
- 2 Wash your hands with warm water and soap. Dry your hands.

### What to Do Next

- 1 Check the label on the insulin bottle to make sure you are using the correct insulin.
- 2 Check the expiration (end) date on your insulin bottle. **Do NOT Use** expired insulin. Throw away any insulin left in the bottle 30 days after you first open the bottle.
- 3 Gently roll the bottle of insulin between your hands until it is mixed. Do not shake the insulin bottle because this can cause air bubbles.



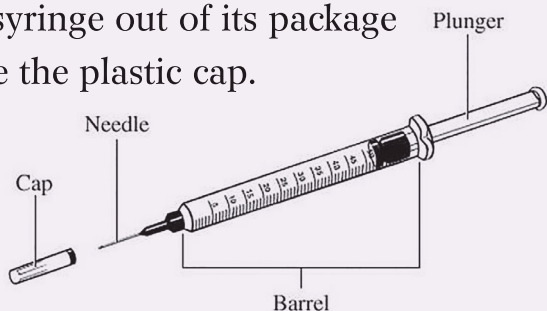
- 4 Wipe off the top of the insulin bottle with an alcohol pad. Do not touch the top of the bottle so it will stay clean.



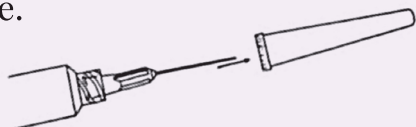
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- 5 Take the syringe out of its package or remove the plastic cap.



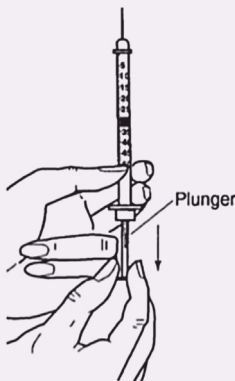
- 6 Take off the needle cap and place it on the table.



- 7 Pull the plunger of the syringe down to the number of units of insulin you need. The syringe will fill with air.

The syringe has small lines and numbers. Look at the type of needle you have.

- If you are using a 50-unit syringe, the space between each line is 1 unit.
- If you are using a 100-unit syringe, the space between each line is 2 units.



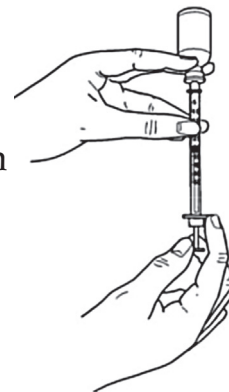
Move the plunger so the dark end closest to the needle matches the number of units you need.

- 8 Carefully put the needle through the rubber stopper of the insulin bottle. Push the air into the bottle by pushing the plunger all the way down. Putting air in the bottle makes it easier to get the insulin out of the bottle.



- 9 Turn the insulin bottle upside down with the syringe still in place.

- Support the needle in the bottle so it does not bend.
- Pull the plunger down to the number of units of insulin you need.



- 10 Check for air bubbles in the syringe. Air bubbles will not hurt you, but will take the place of insulin. This could cause you to get less insulin than you need because there is no insulin in the air bubble.

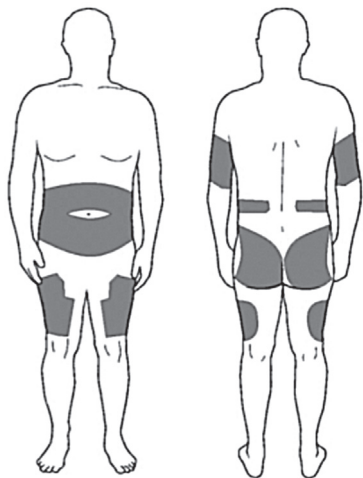
If you see air bubbles:

- Tap the syringe firmly with your fingertip to move the bubbles to the top of the syringe.
- Push the plunger up a few units until the air bubbles go back into the insulin bottle.
- Pull down on the plunger and fill the syringe with the correct amount of insulin.
- Check again for air bubbles.



- 11 Take the needle out of the insulin bottle.

## Select the Site for the Shot



- 1 Sites which can be used are:
  - Back of upper arms
  - Abdomen (around navel)
  - Front and side area of thighs
  - Back above waist
  - Buttocks
- 2 Stay 1 inch away from previous injections.
- 3 Stay 2 inches away from your navel or scars.
- 4 **Do not** use sites that are bruised, tender or swollen.

## Giving the Insulin

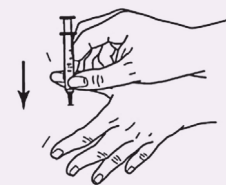
- 1 Clean the site with an alcohol pad. Let the alcohol dry. If you have just showered or bathed, you do not need to clean the site again.



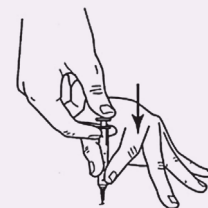
- 2 Pinch up and hold the skin of the site with one hand.  
Hold the syringe like a dart or pencil as shown in the picture.



- 3 Put the needle straight into the skin at a 90 degree angle.
  - Use a quick motion.
  - The quicker you put the needle in, the less it hurts.
  - Push the needle all the way into the skin.



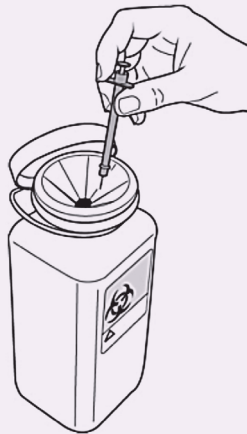
- 4 Let go of the pinch of skin unless you are told not to.
- 5 Push the plunger all the way down until all the insulin is in. Wait 5 seconds.



- 6 Remove the needle. Put your finger on the site and apply pressure for 30 to 60 seconds.
- 7 Check the site for any redness, bleeding or bruising. Put a band-aid on the site if there is bleeding.

## Clean Up the Supplies

- 1 Do not recap the needle. Put the used syringe, needle and cap into a needle disposal container. Your drug store can give you a free container.
- 2 Be sure to store new and used syringes and needles out of the reach of children and pets.
- 3 Wash your hands again.
- 4 Store the insulin in the refrigerator between shots.
- 5 When the needle disposal container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, mail in or drop off at a toxic waste site. (Call **1-800-606-6606** for more details.) **Do not** put the container with needles in the trash.



**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

## You don't have to do this alone!

For classes and one on one support with diabetes care call Alliance Health Programs at **510-747-4577**.

Toll-Free: 1-877-932-2738;  
CRS/TTY: 711 or 1-800-735-2929;  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

[www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org)

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