

Starting Insulin – a patient guide

ABOUT INSULIN

Your body needs insulin to help the energy from the food you eat get into your cells.

You may take the same amount of insulin every day, or it may change.

You need to test and write down your blood sugar results every day, using the blood sugar testing machine called a glucometer. This will help your healthcare provider know how much insulin you need.

There are many different kinds of insulin. Some last a long time, others work fast and do not last very long.

This chart tells you about insulin, when it starts working, when it is the strongest (“peaks”) and how long it lasts.

TYPE OF INSULIN	STARTS WORKING WITHIN	PEAKS IN	LASTS	EXAMPLE
Rapid-acting insulin	15 minutes after injection	1 or 2 hours after injection	2 to 4 hours	<i>Insulin aspart (Fiasp, NovoLog)</i> <i>Insulin glulisine (Apidra)</i> <i>Insulin lispro (Admelog, Humalog)</i>
Regular or short-acting insulin	30 minutes after injection	2 to 3 hours after injection	3 to 6 hours	<i>Human Regular (Humulin R, Novolin R, Velosulin R)</i>
Intermediate-acting insulin	2 to 4 hours after injection	4 to 12 hours after injection	12 to 18 hours	<i>NPH (Humulin N, Novolin N, ReliOn)</i>
Long-acting insulin	several hours after injection	lowers glucose levels up to 24 hours	Up to 24 hours	<i>Degludec (Tresiba)</i> <i>Detemir (Levemir)</i> <i>Glargine (Basaglar, Lantus)</i>
Ultra-long-acting	in 6 hours after injection	does not peak	36 hours or longer	<i>Glargine u-300 (Toujeo)</i>

<https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/medication-management/insulin-other-injectables/insulin-basics>

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You may need to mix different types insulin yourself. Some types of insulin come in pre-mixed bottles. Your healthcare provider will help you choose.

Mixing Insulin

- The clear insulin needs to go in the syringe before the cloudy insulin.
- The cloudy insulin needs to be mixed gently in your hands before using.
- Do not shake the bottle.
- Check to make sure you are always using the right insulin.



Storing Insulin

- An opened bottle of insulin can be kept at room temperature.
- If it will not be used up in 30 days, store in the refrigerator.
- If it is at room temperature for more than 30 days, throw it away.
- Do not store insulin in the freezer.
- Do not store insulin in your car or on a windowsill.
- If the insulin is supposed to be clear and it is cloudy or has lumps in it, throw it away.
- Always have an extra bottle of insulin on hand.
- Do **not** share insulin with others.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about insulin.