

Using a Reusable Insulin Pen

What is an Insulin Pen?

An insulin pen is the most common way of giving an insulin shot (injection). They are easier to use and more convenient than syringes and insulin bottles. There are different kinds of pens. Some pens are pre-filled with insulin and can be thrown away when empty. Some pens are reusable and can be loaded with new cartridges of insulin when they are empty.

How do I use a reusable pen?



1. Take off the pen cap.
2. If a new cartridge is needed, check to be sure the type of insulin listed on the cartridge is what you need to give.
3. Unscrew the cartridge holder from the pen body. Carefully load a new cartridge. Put the small end (cartridge seal) into the cartridge holder.
4. **Do not manually push down the plunger.** Screw the cartridge holder onto the pen body.
5. Screw on the pen needle.
6. To prime the needle.
 - a. Point the needle up into the air.
 - b. Dial up 2 units of insulin and push on the dose knob. You should see a stream of insulin come out of the needle.
 - c. If no insulin stream is seen, repeat steps a and b.
7. Dial up the dose as you were told by the doctor or nurse.
8. Make sure the area that will be used is clean. If need be, use soap and water to clean the area.
9. With one hand, grasp and hold the area around where you plan to poke.
10. Use your other hand to insert the needle straight into the skin. Do not poke at an angle.
11. Push down the dose knob to deliver the insulin. Check to make sure that the dial reads "0". This means that the whole dose has been delivered.
12. Hold the pen and needle in place under the skin for 10 full seconds.
13. Gently pull out the needle.
14. Remove the needle from the pen. Dispose of the needle in a sharps container.
15. Leave the cartridge in the pen until the next dose.
16. Put the pen cap back on.



Storage

- Keep in a safe area away from children.
- Never play with the dial before using the pen.
- Do not refrigerate the pen **after** opening it.
- Insulin expires after 28 days after it is opened.
- Throw empty and expired cartridges into sharps containers.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.