

Insulin and Diabetes

Taking insulin can help keep blood sugar levels in a normal range and control your diabetes. People who take insulin still need to eat the right way, exercise and check their blood sugar.

People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin to live because their pancreas does not make insulin anymore. People with type 2 diabetes may need to take insulin if their pancreas does not make enough, or if insulin cannot get into the cells.

Insulin can be taken with an insulin syringe or needle, an insulin pen, or an insulin pump. Insulin does not come in a pill.

Important!

- There are different kinds of insulin, so know what kind you take.
- You may need to take more than one kind of insulin.
- You may need to take insulin 3 to 4 times each day.

Types of Insulin

Humalog, Novolog and Apidra

are types of insulin that start to work 10 to 20 minutes after you take them. They work their best 30 minutes to 3 hours after they are taken and stay in your body for 3 to 5 hours. These insulins should look clear.

Humulin R and Novolin R

insulin start to work 30 to 60 minutes after you take them. They work their best 1½ to 4 hours after they are taken and stay in your body for 5 to 8 hours. These insulins should look clear.

Humulin N and Novolin N

insulin start to work 1 to 2 hours after you take them. They work their best 2 to 12 hours after they are taken and stay in your body 14 to 24 hours. These insulins should look cloudy.

Lantus and Levamir

insulin start to work 50 minutes to 2 hours after you take them. They stay in your body for 20 to 24 hours. These insulins should look clear.

Humalog Mix 75/25, Humalog Mix 50/50 and Novolog Mix 70/30 insulin start to work 10 to 20 minutes after you take them. They work their best 30 minutes to 2 ½ hours after they are taken and stay in your body for up to 24 hours. These insulins should look cloudy.

Humulin 70/30, Humulin 50/50 and Novolin 70/30

insulin start to work 30 to 60 minutes after you take them. They work their best 2 to 12 hours after they are taken and stay in your body up to 24 hours. These insulins should look cloudy.

Things you should know if you take insulin:

- Bottles of insulin that have not been opened should be kept in the refrigerator until the “use by” date. This date is marked on the insulin package.
- Once you open the insulin bottle, you **do not** have to keep it in the refrigerator. Make sure to keep it some place where it will not get too hot or too cold.
- Once you open a bottle of insulin, it is only good for 28 days. Write the date you open it on the bottle and throw it away after 28 days.
- Insulin should not have clumps, crystals or strings in it. It should not look discolored.
- When you pick up your insulin at the pharmacy, check to be sure you have the right kind of insulin. Look at the brand name, strength, and type.
- Do not mix Lantus or Levamir in the same syringe with any other insulin.
- Check with your pharmacist about the right way to store your insulin pens or cartridges.

If you would like to learn more about diabetes,
contact the Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland.

Ask to talk with an educator.



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