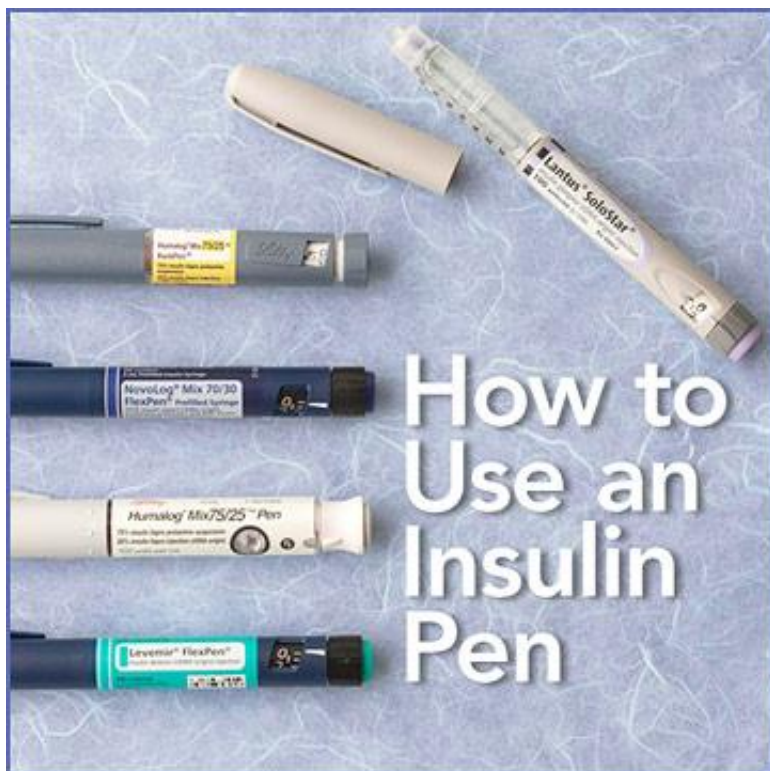


## How to Use an Insulin Pen

Whether you're at home or on the go, an insulin pen offers the benefits of accuracy, convenience, and confidence to people with diabetes. Here's how to use one safely and easily.

### The Benefits of an Insulin Pen



The sleek design and compact size of insulin pens allow accurate, simplified, convenient insulin delivery. Several, but not all, insulin types are available. Your doctor will determine the best option for you.

Pens most often come prefilled and are disposable when empty. A few models may require you to load an insulin cartridge. Multiple doses are possible with each pen or cartridge holding 300 units, packaged five per box for a total of 1,500 units. Possible single-dose amounts range from 1/2 unit up to 80 units, depending on the pen. New, unopened insulin should be refrigerated. Once in use, keep at room temperature, below 86 degrees F. Use according to package insert (10-42 days), specific to insulin type.

If required, load insulin cartridge into pen device. Prior to first-time use, seek instruction from a diabetes educator or pharmacist.

### Step 1: Prep the Insulin Pen

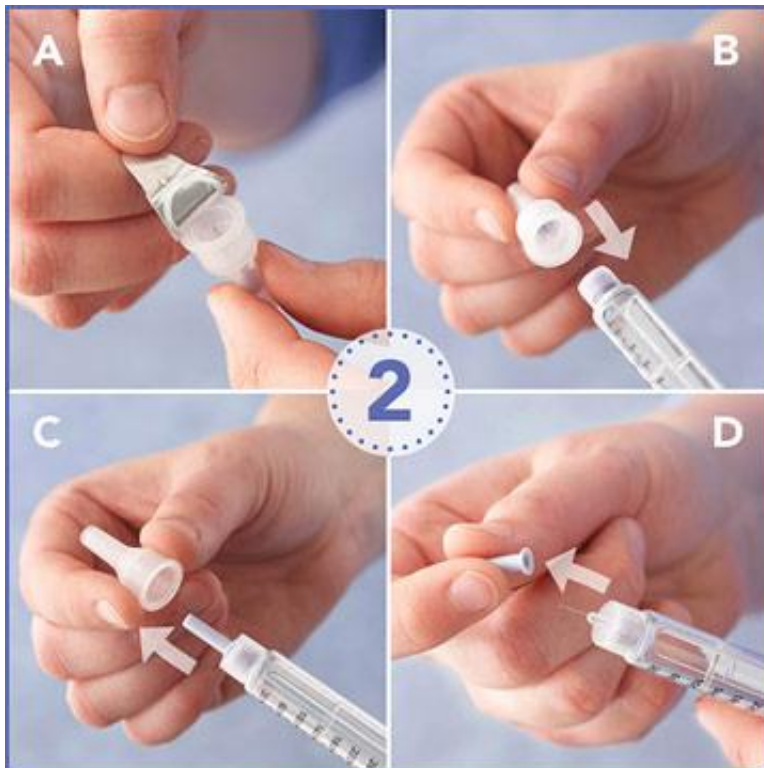
**Step 1:** Remove pen cover or cap.



If using milky-white (intermediate-acting) insulin, gently roll pen between palms 15 seconds to mix. Carry on with remaining steps.

Successfully manage type 2 diabetes. [4]

## Remove Paper Tab and Needle Covers



**Step 2:** Get the needle ready.

A. Pull paper tab off pen needle.\*

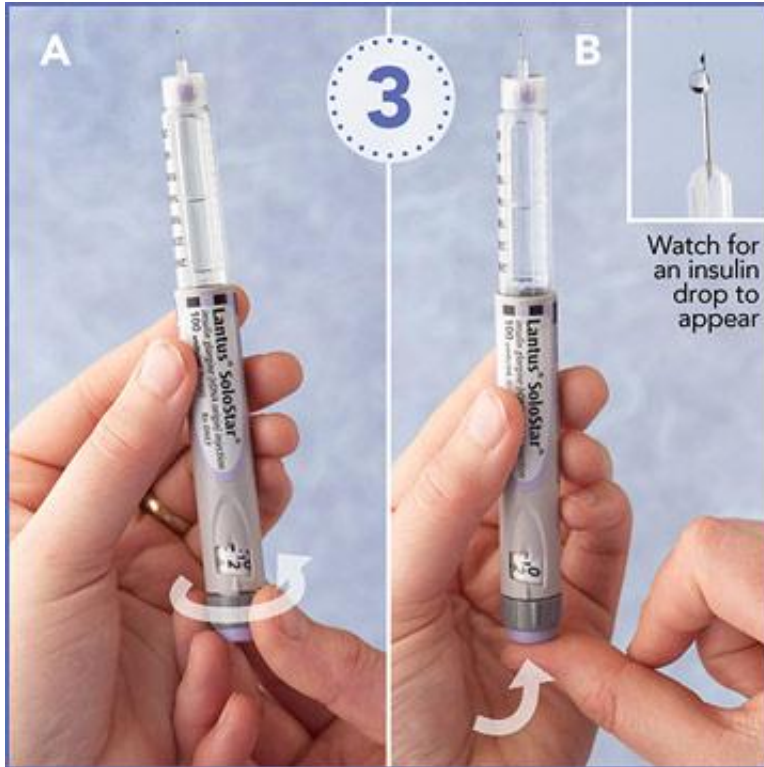
B. Screw needle onto insulin end of pen.

C. Remove outer needle cover.

D. Remove inner needle cover to expose the needle. Throw inner needle cover in trash.

\*Pen needles are available in many sizes. Ask your diabetes educator or pharmacist for advice.

## Step 3: Prime the Insulin Pen



### Step 3: Get the pen ready.

A. Prime the pen and clear air from needle. This adjusts the pen and needle for good accuracy when it's time to measure your insulin dose. Turn the dose selector knob at end of the pen to 1 or 2 units (watch dose markings change with turning of knob).

B. Hold the pen with needle pointing upward. Press dose knob up completely while watching for insulin drop or stream to appear. Repeat, if necessary, until insulin is seen at needle tip. The dial should be back at zero after completing the priming step.

## Dial in Your Insulin Dose



**Step 4:** Turn dose knob to "dial in" your insulin dose. (You can dial backward, too.) The pen will allow you to receive *only* the amount that you have set. Double-check the dose window to assure your proper dose.

Try these tips to lower your A1C. [11]

## Choose an Injection Site



**Step 5:** Select an injection site. The abdomen is the preferred place for many types of insulin--between the bottom of the ribs and pubic line, avoiding 3-4 inches surrounding the navel. The top of the thighs and back of upper arms (if you are flexible) may also be used.

[Learn how to ease the pain of your first injection.](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

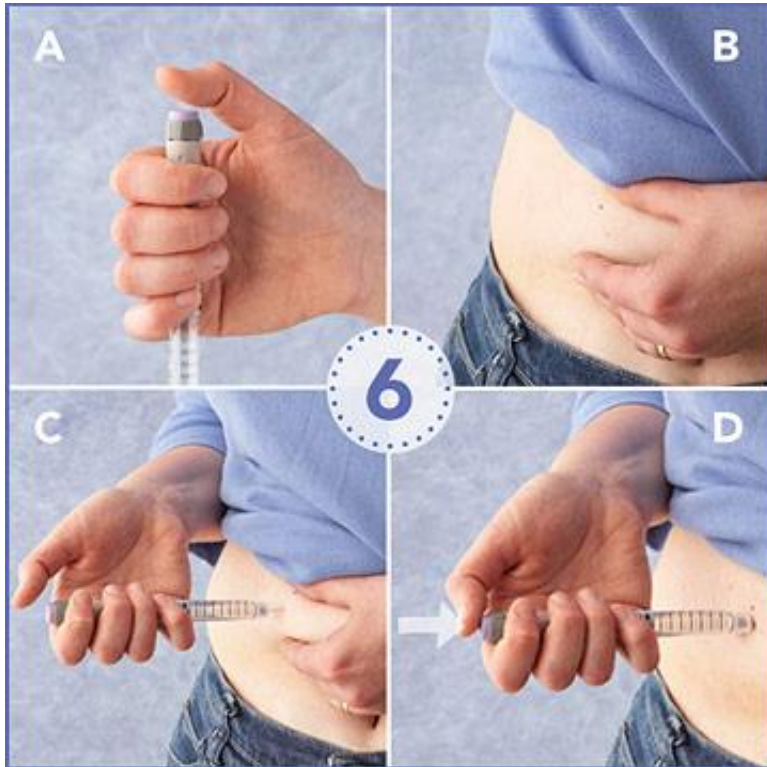
## Inject the Insulin

**Step 6:** Inject insulin.

- Curl fingers around the upper end of the pen to hold secure. Poise thumb, in air, above dose knob.
- Gently pinch up skin with your free hand.
- Quickly insert the needle at a 90-degree angle. Release the pinch.
- Use your thumb to press down on the dose knob until it stops (the dose window will be back at zero). Leave the needle in place for 5-10 seconds to help prevent insulin from leaking out of the injection spot (see package insert to learn timing recommendation for your pen).

Pull the needle straight out of the skin. It is normal to sometimes see a small drop of blood or bruise. You may lightly pat the site with a tissue or cotton ball, but do not massage the area.

[Follow our easy-to-follow steps for injecting insulin.](#) <sup>[17]</sup>



## Prep the Insulin Pen for Future Use



**Step 7:** Place outer needle cover over needle and twist to unscrew needle from pen. Throw used needle away in hard container (an empty pill container or detergent jug are safe examples). Put the outer needle cover back on the pen.

Congratulations, you're done!

---

Copyright © 2013, Meredith Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/27/2016 - 23:57):** <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/medication/insulin/how-to-use-insulin-pen>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/benefits-insulin-pen>
- [2] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30205%23comment-form>
- [3] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/step-1-prep-insulin-pen>
- [4] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/type-2-diabetes/causes/managing-type-2-diabetes>
- [5] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30206%23comment-form>
- [6] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/remove-paper-tab-and-needle-covers>
- [7] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30207%23comment-form>
- [8] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/step-3-prime-insulin-pen>
- [9] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30208%23comment-form>
- [10] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/dial-your-insulin-dose>
- [11] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/monitoring/alc/tips-to-lower-a1c>
- [12] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30209%23comment-form>
- [13] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/choose-injection-site-0>
- [14] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/medication/pain-management/ease-injection-pain>
- [15] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30210%23comment-form>
- [16] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/inject-insulin>
- [17] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/medication/insulin/how-to-inject-insulin>
- [18] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30211%23comment-form>
- [19] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/slide/prep-insulin-pen-future-use>
- [20] <http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com/user/login?destination=node/30212%23comment-form>