

# Insulin Syringes, Pens, and Pumps

Insulin cannot be taken as a pill. You must use a shot, a special kind of pen, or an insulin pump to get insulin into the body. There is also a newer type of insulin that can be inhaled.<sup>1</sup>

## Insulin Syringes



A shot is the most common way to take insulin. The shot is given using a syringe.

A syringe is a hollow plastic tube with a plunger inside and a small needle attached to one end. The needles come in different sizes and are shorter and thinner than most needles you may have seen. Each syringe and needle should only be used one time.

### Syringes come in different sizes:\*

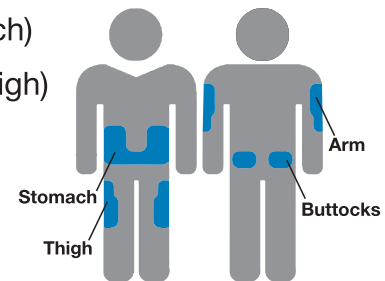
If you take 30 units of insulin or less use...	30-unit syringe
If you take 50 units of insulin or less use...	50-unit syringe
If you take 100 units of insulin or less use...	100-unit syringe

*\*Make sure that you can see the markings on your syringe*

Your healthcare provider can help you decide what type of syringe is best for you.

### The injection should be given just under the skin:

- In the fatty part of your upper arm
- In the belly (stomach)
- In the upper leg (thigh)
- In the buttocks<sup>1</sup>



Insulin shots do not cause much pain or discomfort. Needles used today are much thinner and smoother than those used in the past.

## Insulin Pens



Insulin pens look like writing pens, but there is a small needle on one end. Some pens can be refilled with insulin. Other pens should be thrown away when empty. Pre-filled pens either come with one type of insulin or a mix of two different types of insulin. Pens make it easier to use and give the correct dose of insulin.

## Insulin Pumps



An insulin pump is a small machine that you wear on the body. It gives small amounts of insulin throughout the day. You can also have the pump give more insulin based on the size of the meal or snack you ate. Insulin pumps are most often used for people with type 1 diabetes.

Your healthcare provider will discuss the different ways you can take insulin and will help decide which way is right for you.

1. American Diabetes Association. Standards of medical care in diabetes – 2019. Diabetes Care. 2019; Vol. 42 (Supp. 1): S91