

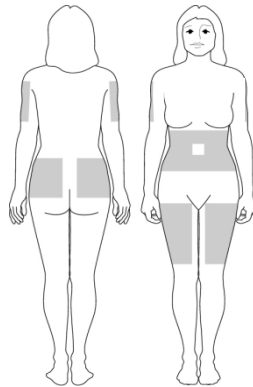
## Using Insulin Pens

Insulin can be given using a syringe or a pen device. Use the pictures and steps listed below to learn how to use your pen.

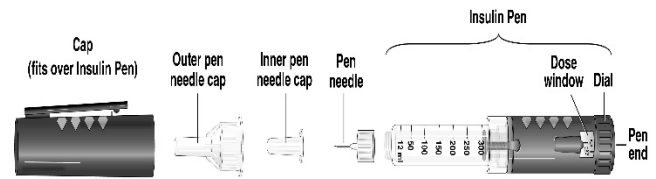
### Where to Inject Insulin

Injections are given into fatty tissue. (See shaded areas on the right.) Rotate your injection sites to prevent tissue damage.

- **Abdomen:** Do not use areas within one inch of your belly button. Avoid scar tissue.
- **Arms:** Use the back side of your upper arm. It can be hard to reach this area yourself.
- **Thighs:** Use middle and outer areas where there is more fatty tissue.
- **Buttocks:** Inject into fatty tissue. This site may also be hard to reach.



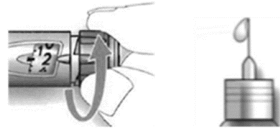
### Parts of an Insulin Pen



### Steps for Using an Insulin Pen

- 1 Wash your hands and be sure the injection site is clean.**
- 2 Check the pen label to make sure you are using the correct type of insulin. If using a mixed insulin, roll the pen between your hands 10 times. The insulin should look cloudy/milky white after mixing.**
- 3 Clean the rubber stopper on your pen with an alcohol wipe.**
- 4 Remove the foil seal on the pen needle. Push the pen needle into the rubber stopper and twist to tighten.**
- 5 Pull off both pen needle caps.**
- 6 Prime the pen by dialing in 2 units (or 5 units if using the U-500 pen). This is sometimes called the "air shot" test and should be done with every new needle. Point the pen needle up. Push the button of your pen and watch for at least 1 drop of insulin at the needle tip. If you don't see a drop, repeat this step up to 4 times.**
- 7 Turn the dial to the number of insulin units you need.**
- 8 Inject the needle into your skin at a 90 degree angle.**
- 9 Push the button down all the way until dose reads "0".**
- 10 Count to 10. Pull the needle out of your skin.**
- 11 Unscrew the pen needle and dispose in a Sharps box. Use a new needle with each injection.**

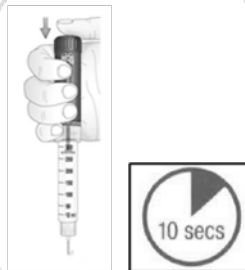
Step 6



Step 7



Step 8 and 9



### **When Insulin Gets Low or Empty**

You will not be able to turn the dial beyond the number of units left in the pen. If you need to give a partial dose, write down the number of units you are giving. Use a new pen to give the rest of your dose. When the pen is empty, throw away in the trash. Pens do expire. Ask your nurse or pharmacist about this since it varies based on insulin type.

Image source: Media Solutions, UW School of Medicine and Public Health. Permission for use granted by the Wisconsin Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2022 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7375