

Using Insulin Pens

You may be using an insulin pen to deliver a dose of insulin. Insulin pens are devices designed to make giving insulin a little easier. They look much like a pen and cap (this is where the name comes from) and come pre-filled with 300 units of insulin. A knob at the end of the pen “dials up” the insulin dose. In most cases, each “click” that you hear is equal to 1 unit of insulin. The pens may be reused until they run out of insulin at which point the entire pen is thrown out and a new one is started.

Insulin from a pen is given using a pen needle. This is a small needle which is put on the end of the pen using a twist motion. Ideally the needle is changed every time that the pen is used. However, some patients will use a needle more than once before changing it.

As there are many types of insulin pens, you will be given individualized instruction on how to use the insulin pen that is prescribed for you/your child.

A few points to remember about Insulin Pens

- Before every use, it is important to “waste” 2-3 units into the sink or garbage. This is so that you can see that the needle is full of insulin. If this step is not done, the wrong dose of insulin (or no insulin at all) may be given
- If you don’t see drops of insulin come out the needle when you are doing a “waste”, repeat the steps until you see insulin come out.
- Count the clicks and look in the dose window to confirm the right dose
- The pen should be held straight up and down, perpendicular to the injection site
- It is important to wait 5-10 seconds after injecting the insulin before pulling out the needle. This allows the entire insulin dose to leave the pen and enter the body.