HOW DO I TAKE INSULIN?
A guide to insulin devices
With you all the way is a support programme created by Novo Nordisk especially for kids with diabetes.

This material has been reviewed by a panel of experts:
- Lead Diabetes Specialist Nurse – Nicola Lewis, UK
- Paediatric Endocrinologists – Prof Thomas Danne, Germany and Dr Nandu Thalange, UK

Your doctor or nurse will advise which insulin device is the best option for you.

This information is not designed to replace the advice of your doctor or nurse. You and your parents should talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions about your diabetes.
Taking insulin
As your body cannot make enough insulin, you will need to take insulin every day instead.

There are two main ways to take insulin:

Injections

Your doctor or nurse may give you needles, syringes and vials of insulin – they will show you and your parents how to use them.
Using an insulin pen

At first, you will probably be given a pen device to inject insulin. Pens are designed to be easy to use.¹

Some pens come in different colours and have different skins (covers), so you can personalise your pen.² Some insulin pens also have a memory function, which records the time the last dose was taken in case you forget.²

Injecting insulin

Your doctor or nurse will show you and your parents how to inject. Don’t worry if you don’t feel comfortable doing this on your own – your parents or another adult will be able to help you or do this for you.

There is no set age when you should be doing your own injections. When you feel ready you will be able to learn how to inject yourself.

A small needle is attached to the end of the pen to inject the insulin¹ (these need to be thrown away in a special ‘sharps’ bin after each use).

Dose needed is selected by turning a dial.¹

The button at the end of the pen is pressed to inject the dose.²
Injections can be scary and may hurt a bit sometimes. Try to relax and think about something else. You may find it helps to look at one of your favourite books or television programmes while you have your injection.

Your doctor or nurse will be able to give you tips to help make injections hurt less, such as putting ice on your skin before you inject or using a different needle.

Where to inject

Your doctor or nurse will show you how and where to inject. This may be different for different types of insulin, as insulin is taken up by the body at different speeds from different sites.

The most common places to inject insulin are:  
- Belly (abdomen)  
- Top of bottom (upper buttocks)  
- Thighs  
- Upper arms (if advised by your doctor or nurse)

You will be taught to rotate injection sites. This helps prevent bumps from appearing under the skin.
Using an insulin pump

An insulin pump is a device about the size of a mobile phone that continuously delivers insulin. The pump allows you to take your insulin while you are at school, or at a friend’s house.

You will need to wear it all day and during the night. The pump delivers insulin throughout the day. Extra doses are given at mealtimes and if required at other times.

The tube will need to be moved every few days and new insulin put in the pump.

Your doctor or nurse will show you and your parents how to use your pump.

The insulin gets into your body through a thin plastic tube which is inserted into your belly using a small tube.
The pump has buttons to control the amount of insulin you receive and give extra insulin when it is needed.  

References


About Novo Nordisk

This information was developed by Novo Nordisk, a global healthcare company specialising in the care of people with diabetes.

Novo Nordisk was started up almost 90 years ago by a Danish couple with a passion for changing diabetes. August Krogh was a professor at the University of Copenhagen and Nobel Prize winner and his wife Marie, a doctor and researcher into metabolic diseases, suffered from type 2 diabetes. They learned of insulin being developed in Canada and were determined to ensure access to insulin for everyone with diabetes, hence in 1923 Novo Nordisk was born.

Since then Novo Nordisk has grown to become a world leader in the provision of diabetes products and support for patients of all ages.

We fully understand the challenges that children with diabetes face and are working together with parents, schools and healthcare professionals to improve the care of children with diabetes, as they grow up and develop.

For more information about Novo Nordisk, please visit: www.novonordisk.com

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