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## PHARMACIST'S LETTER / PRESCRIBER'S LETTER

December 2016 ~ Resource #321202

## **How to Switch Insulin Products**

Switching insulins should always be done with prescriber approval and close monitoring. Advise patients to closely monitor blood glucose levels after switching insulins. If switching between human insulin brands (e.g., *Humulin R* to *Novolin R*, *Humulin N* to *Novolin N*, or *Humulin N*/R or *Novolin N/R* to "store brand" *N/R*), keep the number of units each day the same. However, because these brands are not AB rated you may need to contact the prescriber for approval to switch brands. See our chart, *Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds*, for meal timing, onset, peak, duration of action, and other information. Also see our algorithm, *Initiation and Adjustment of Insulin Regimens for Type 2 Diabetes*.

Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
NPH to long-acting	
NPH to insulin detemir (Levemir)	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Some patients may require more insulin detemir than NPH.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Give insulin detemir once daily, or divide twice daily.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Do not mix insulin detemir with other insulins.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
NPH to insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> )	<ul> <li>NPH once daily: convert unit-per-unit to Lantus or Toujeo and give once daily.<sup>2,14</sup> No specific information to guide NPH once daily to Basaglar switch. Consider conversion as for Lantus, given Lantus/Basaglar dose equivalency.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
NPH to insulin glargine U-300 (Toujeo)	<ul> <li>NPH twice daily: reduce total daily dose by 20% and give <i>Lantus/Basaglar</i> or <i>Toujeo</i> once daily. 2,12,14</li> <li>May take ≥5 days to see the max effect of the selected dose of <i>Toujeo</i>. Do not increase dose more often than every 3 to 4 days. 14</li> <li>Do not mix insulin glargine with other insulins. 2,12,14</li> </ul>
Long-acting to NPH	
Insulin detemir (Levemir) to NPH	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>Give NPH twice daily (e.g., 50:50 or 2/3 in AM and 1/3 before dinner or at bedtime).<sup>3,4</sup></li> </ul>
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ) to NPH Insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> ) to NPH	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit from Lantus.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>No specific information to guide Basaglar to NPH switch. Consider conversion as for Lantus, given Lantus/Basaglar dose equivalency.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>No specific information to guide Toujeo to NPH switch. Consider 20% dose reduction to be conservative.</li> <li>Give NPH twice daily (e.g., 50:50 or 2/3 in AM and 1/3 before dinner or at bedtime).<sup>3,4</sup></li> </ul>

Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
Long-acting to long-acting	
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> ) to/from insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Basaglar</i> )	• Convert unit-per-unit <sup>12</sup>
Insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ) to insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> )	<ul> <li>Consider converting unit-per-unit to <i>Lantus</i>.<sup>3,5</sup> A lower daily dose may be needed.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>No specific information to guide <i>Levemir</i> to <i>Basaglar</i> switch. Consider conversion as for <i>Lantus</i>, given <i>Lantus/Basaglar</i> dose equivalency.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>Give once daily.<sup>5,12</sup></li> <li>Do not mix insulin glargine with other insulins.<sup>2,12</sup></li> </ul>
Insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ) to insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> )	<ul> <li>Levemir once daily: convert unit-per-unit and give once daily. 16</li> <li>Levemir twice daily: reduce total daily dose by 20% and give once daily. 18</li> <li>May take ≥5 days to see the max effect of the selected dose of <i>Toujeo</i>. Do not increase dose more often than every 3 to 4 days. 14</li> <li>Do not mix insulin glargine with other insulins. 14</li> </ul>
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ) to insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> )	<ul> <li>Lantus once daily: convert unit-per-unit and give once daily. 16</li> <li>Lantus twice daily: convert unit-per-unit (or reduce by about 10% or less) and give once daily. 18</li> <li>For patients controlled on Lantus, expect that a higher daily dose (about 10% to 18%) of Toujeo will be needed to maintain control. 17</li> <li>No specific information to guide Basaglar to Toujeo switch. Consider conversion as for Lantus, given Lantus/Basaglar dose equivalency. 12</li> <li>May take ≥5 days to see the max effect of the selected dose of Toujeo. Do not increase dose more often than every 3 to 4 days. 14</li> <li>Do not mix insulin glargine with other insulins. 14</li> </ul>
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ) to insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> )	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit from Lantus.<sup>1,5</sup></li> <li>No specific information to guide Basaglar to Levemir switch. Consider conversion as for Lantus, given Lantus/Basaglar dose equivalency.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>Give once daily, or divide twice daily.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If divided twice daily, a higher daily dose may be needed.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Do not mix insulin detemir with other insulins.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>





Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
Long-acting to long-acting, continued	
Insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> ) to insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ) or insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> )	<ul> <li>Reduce dose by about 20% when converting to <i>Lantus</i> or <i>Basaglar</i>. 12,17</li> <li>No info specific to <i>Levemir</i>; consider 20% dose reduction to be conservative.</li> </ul>
NPH or long-acting to ultra-long acting	
NPH, insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), or insulin glargine ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> , <i>Toujeo</i> ) to insulin degludec ( <i>Tresiba</i> )	<ul> <li>Convert total daily dose unit-per-unit and give once daily.<sup>19</sup></li> <li>Consider a 20% dose reduction if switching from a twice-daily schedule.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>Also consider a dose reduction when switching from a once-daily schedule.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>Do not increase the dose more often than every 3 to 4 days.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>
Ultra-long acting to NPH or long-acting	
Insulin degludec ( <i>Tresiba</i> ) to NPH, insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), or insulin glargine ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> , <i>Toujeo</i> )  NPH or long-acting to premixed ultra-lo NPH, insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), or insulin glargine ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> , <i>Toujeo</i> ) to insulin degludec/insulin aspart ( <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30)	<ul> <li>Limited information. Consider converting unit-per-unit.<sup>22</sup></li> <li>Give <i>Levemir</i>, <i>Lantus</i>, <i>Basaglar</i>, or <i>Toujeo</i> once daily, or divide <i>Levemir</i> twice daily.<sup>1,2,12,14</sup></li> <li>Give NPH twice daily (e.g., 50:50 or 2/3 in AM and 1/3 before dinner or at bedtime).<sup>3,4</sup></li> <li>Start <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30 at the same unit dose and injection schedule (i.e., once or twice daily) with the main meal(s).<sup>20</sup></li> <li>In patients switching from a regimen that includes a basal plus regular or rapid-acting insulin at mealtimes, start <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30 once daily with the main meal at the same unit dose as the basal insulin. Continue the regular or rapid-acting insulin at the same dose for meals not covered by <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30.<sup>20</sup></li> <li>No information available concerning <i>Ryzodeg</i> switch to NPH or long-acting insulins.</li> </ul>
Regular to rapid-acting Regular human insulin ( <i>Humulin R</i> , <i>Novolin R</i> ) to rapid-acting insulin analog (insulin aspart [ <i>NovoLog</i> ], insulin glulisine [ <i>Apidra</i> ], insulin lispro [ <i>Humalog</i> ])	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit.<sup>3,8-10</sup></li> <li>Due to rapid onset and shorter duration of action, more basal insulin and more total insulin may be required to prevent pre-meal hypoglycemia.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>Rapid-acting insulin analogs have a faster onset of action and a shorter duration of action than human regular insulin. See <i>Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds</i> for specifics of meal timing.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>





Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
Regular to inhaled insulin	
Regular human insulin ( <i>Humulin R</i> , <i>Novolin R</i> ) to mealtime insulin inhalation powder ( <i>Afrezza</i> )	• Round each mealtime insulin dose up to the nearest 4 units, then convert unit-per-unit to the <i>Afrezza</i> dose (available in 4-unit and 8-unit cartridges). 15
Rapid-acting to regular	
Insulin aspart (NovoLog), insulin	• Convert unit-per-unit. 3,8-10
glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> ), or insulin lispro ( <i>Humalog</i> ) to regular human insulin ( <i>Humulin R</i> , <i>Novolin R</i> )	• Rapid-acting analogs have a faster onset and a shorter duration of action than human regular insulin. See <i>Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds</i> for specifics of meal timing. <sup>11</sup>
Rapid-acting to rapid-acting	
Insulin aspart (NovoLog), insulin	• Convert unit-per-unit. 3,8-10
glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> ), or insulin lispro ( <i>Humalog</i> ) to insulin aspart ( <i>NovoLog</i> ), insulin glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> ), or insulin lispro ( <i>Humalog</i> )	• See Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds for specifics of meal timing. 11
Rapid-acting to inhaled insulin	
Insulin aspart ( <i>NovoLog</i> ), insulin glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> ), or insulin lispro ( <i>Humalog</i> ) to mealtime insulin inhalation powder ( <i>Afrezza</i> )	• Round each mealtime insulin dose up to the nearest 4 units, then convert unit-per-unit to the <i>Afrezza</i> dose (available in 4-unit and 8-unit cartridges). 15
Inhaled insulin to rapid-acting or regular	
Insulin inhalation powder (Afrezza) to	• Convert unit-per-unit. 15
insulin aspart ( <i>NovoLog</i> ), insulin glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> ), insulin lispro	<ul> <li>See Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds for specifics of timing in relation to meals.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>
(Humalog), regular human insulin (Humulin R, Novolin R)	





Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
Regular to Long-Acting	
Regular human insulin ( <i>Humulin R</i> , <i>Novolin R</i> ) to insulin glargine ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> , <i>Toujeo</i> ), insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), or NPH	<ul> <li>Add up the total daily dose and start with 50% as intermediate or long-acting insulin, or start an initial insulin regimen, as suggested in our algorithm, <i>Initiation and Adjustment of Insulin Regimens for Type 2 Diabetes</i>.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
Premixed to premixed	
Premixed NPH/regular insulin ( <i>Humulin</i> 70/30, <i>Novolin</i> 70/30) to premixed protamine/rapid-acting analog (insulin lispro protamine/insulin lispro [ <i>Humalog Mix</i> 75/25], insulin aspart protamine/insulin aspart [ <i>NovoLog Mix</i> 70/30])	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit<sup>3,13</sup></li> <li>Premix analogs have a faster onset but similar duration compared to human premixes. See <i>Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds</i>, for specifics of meal timing.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>
Premixed protamine/rapid-acting analog (insulin lispro protamine/insulin lispro [Humalog Mix 75/25], insulin aspart protamine/insulin aspart [NovoLog Mix70/30]) to premixed NPH/regular insulin (Humulin 70/30, Novolin 70/30)	<ul> <li>Convert unit-per-unit.<sup>3,13</sup></li> <li>Premix analogs have a faster onset but similar duration compared to human premixes. See <i>Comparison of Insulins and Injectable Diabetes Meds</i>, for specifics of meal timing.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>
Premixed protamine/rapid-acting analog (insulin lispro protamine/insulin lispro [Humalog Mix 75/25], insulin aspart protamine/insulin aspart [NovoLog Mix 70/30]), or premixed NPH/regular insulin (Humulin 70/30, Novolin 70/30) to premixed insulin degludec/insulin aspart (Ryzodeg 70/30)	<ul> <li>If using premix once or twice daily, convert unit-per-unit and give <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30 on the same injection schedule.<sup>20</sup></li> <li>In patients also using regular or rapid-acting insulin at mealtimes, continue the regular or rapid-acting insulin at the same dose for meals <u>not</u> covered by <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30.</li> <li>Do not increase the <i>Ryzodeg</i> 70/30 dose more often than every 3 to 4 days.<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>



Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments
Premixed to inhaled insulin	
Premixed NPH/regular insulin ( <i>Humulin</i> 70/30, <i>Novolin</i> 70/30), premixed protamine/rapid-acting analog (insulin lispro protamine/insulin lispro [ <i>Humalog Mix</i> 75/25], insulin aspart protamine/insulin aspart [ <i>NovoLog Mix</i> 70/30]) to mealtime insulin inhalation powder ( <i>Afrezza</i> )	<ul> <li>Divide half the total daily insulin dose equally among the three meals of the day, and round each mealtime insulin dose up to the nearest 4 units, then convert unit-per-unit to the <i>Afrezza</i> dose (available in 4-unit and 8-unit cartridges).<sup>15</sup></li> <li>Give the other half of the total daily insulin dose as basal insulin (i.e., NPH, insulin glargine, or insulin detemir).<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>
U-100 insulin to U-500 insulin	
All types of other insulins to <i>Humulin R U-500</i>	<ul> <li>Determine the total daily dose of U-500 used by adding the units of all types of other insulins given in one day (i.e., unit-per-unit conversion).<sup>23</sup></li> <li>Divide the total daily dose into a two or three times a day regimen (given 30 minutes before meals) for most patients.<sup>23</sup> See our chart, <i>Tips to Improve Insulin Safety</i>, for suggested starting points based on total daily dose.</li> </ul>
Long-acting to long-acting + GLP-1 agor	
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ), insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), or insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> ) to insulin glargine U-100 + lixisenatide ( <i>Soliqua</i> )	<ul> <li>Information not based on any specific long-acting insulin product. Conversions are simply for patients uncontrolled on a long-acting (basal) insulin ≤60 units/day.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Patients on insulin glargine &lt;30 units/day, convert to 15 units insulin glargine/5 mcg lixisenatide once daily.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Patients on insulin glargine 30 units/day to 60 units/day, convert to 30 units insulin glargine/10 mcg lixisenatide once daily.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Soliqua has not been studied with prandial insulins.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Do not mix Soliqua with other insulins.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Titrate doses weekly by 2 to 4 units of insulin glargine (equals 0.66 mcg to 1.32 mcg of lixisenatide component).<sup>24</sup></li> <li>Maximum daily dose is 60 units insulin glargine/20 mcg lixisenatide.<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>





Clinical Scenario	Recommendation/Comments	
Long-acting or ultra-long acting to ultra-long acting + GLP-1 agonist		
Insulin glargine U-100 ( <i>Lantus</i> , <i>Basaglar</i> ), insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> ), insulin glargine U-300 ( <i>Toujeo</i> ), or insulin degludec ( <i>Tresiba</i> ) to insulin degludec + liraglutide ( <i>Xultophy</i> )	<ul> <li>Dosing recommendations are the same regardless of previous insulin dose.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>Start with 16 units insulin degludec/0.58 mg liraglutide given once daily.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>Do not mix <i>Xultophy</i> with other insulins.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>Titrate doses every three to four days, by 2 units insulin degludec (equals 0.072 mg liraglutide).<sup>25</sup></li> <li>Maximum daily dose is 50 units insulin degludec/1.8 mg liraglutide.<sup>25</sup></li> </ul>	

Users of this resource are cautioned to use their own professional judgment and consult any other necessary or appropriate sources prior to making clinical judgments based on the content of this document. Our editors have researched the information with input from experts, government agencies, and national organizations. Information and internet links in this article were current as of the date of publication.





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