

# Insulin and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus



It can be frustrating when you have to add insulin to your treatment plan to manage diabetes. But, know that many people with diabetes need to make changes to their treatment plan at some point. There are benefits to this. For instance, taking insulin can make it easier to manage your blood sugar. And it can prevent complications of diabetes.

## Why do I need insulin now?

Diabetes changes over time. When you first get type 2 diabetes, your pancreas is often making plenty of insulin. But your body can't use the insulin that is made. This is called insulin resistance. It can lead to a buildup of sugar (glucose) in the blood. A healthy diet, regular exercise, and weight loss may help. When these steps aren't enough, diabetes pills can often help. They can reduce insulin resistance. Or increase the insulin the body makes.

But after a few years, things can change. Over time the pancreas may make less and less insulin. Insulin resistance may also get worse. You may be eating right, exercising regularly, and taking your diabetes pills. But it can still be harder to reach your blood sugar goals. At this point, your healthcare provider may switch you to a different pill. Or you may need to take more than one type. You may need to take insulin shots. These shots replace the insulin that your pancreas is no longer making.

## What should I know about insulin?

There are different types of insulin. These include long-acting, intermediate-acting, regular- or short-acting, and rapid-acting. Your healthcare provider will work with you to choose the insulin that's right for you. They will show you how to inject it and how to store it. You may need to take more than 1 shot each day to reach your blood sugar goals. A new form of inhaled insulin is now available for quick doses before meals. But it must be used along with injectable long-acting insulin if you have type 2 diabetes and use long-acting insulin.

The insulin will lower your blood sugar. How quickly this happens depends on the type of insulin. And where on your body you inject it. Your healthcare provider will work with you so that you know how much insulin to take. And how close to a meal or snack you should take it.

Once you start taking insulin, you may still need to take diabetes pills. You should stick with your healthy diet and get exercise on most days. Your medicine, diet, and exercise all work together to keep your blood sugar controlled. And to keep you at your healthy best.

Taking insulin is a big change. It can feel confusing when major changes like this are made to your diabetes management plan. Talk with your healthcare provider. Ask them about diabetes education programs. Also ask about finding a diabetes nurse educator or a diabetes support group. It can be helpful to see a trusted professional. And to have support from people dealing with the same issues. It can make adjusting to a new treatment plan easier.

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