



How insulin can help in type 2 diabetes

Insulin can help you control your blood sugar and improve your long-term health.

Insulin is the best way to help you control your blood sugar if it is still too high with other medications. Your doctor, nurse, diabetes educator, and pharmacist can help you feel confident about using insulin. The information here can help answer some of your questions about starting insulin.

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| <i>Does starting insulin mean my diabetes is more serious?</i> | No. Diabetes is a progressive disease, so that many people will eventually need to use insulin to keep their blood sugar under control. |
| <i>Will starting insulin mean I'll lose my sight or develop kidney problems?</i> | No. Starting insulin is sometimes delayed until very late in diabetes, when people have developed complications, but insulin doesn't cause these problems—quite the opposite. Using insulin earlier in the course of your diabetes to reach your blood sugar target reduces the risk of heart attack, kidney disease, and other diabetes-related complications. |
| <i>How many injections will I have to do every day?</i> | Many patients can control their blood sugar with just one or two insulin injections per day. Adding short-acting insulin at mealtimes may be necessary to control high sugars during the day. Ask your doctor/nurse/diabetes educator to explain the different types of insulin to you. |
| <i>Is it very painful injecting myself?</i> | Modern insulin needles are very small and thin. Most people find that the injection is less painful than a finger stick to monitor their blood sugar. |
| <i>Will insulin cause me to gain weight?</i> | Insulin can cause weight gain. But the benefits of insulin outweigh the risks. Exercise and a healthy diet can help keep weight under control. |
| <i>How will I know if I am having low blood sugar?</i> | Early signs of low blood sugar can include trembling, clammy skin, palpitations (pounding or fast heart beats), anxiety, confusion, or hunger. Finding the right dose of insulin and other diabetes medications, along with eating right and having a sugary snack handy, can prevent or deal with these symptoms. |
| <i>How do I reduce the chance of having low blood sugar?</i> | You can reduce the risk of having low blood sugar by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ planning your exercise ✓ not missing meals ✓ regularly measuring your blood sugar levels ✓ avoiding excessive alcohol use |
| <i>Isn't insulin very expensive?</i> | Some kinds of insulin are expensive, especially if you use insulin pens. However it is often less expensive than some oral medications. Ask your doctor which insulin products are the most affordable. Prices can vary among pharmacies and depending on your health insurance coverage. |



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These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating physician based on an individual patient's clinical condition. These materials were made possible by the PACE Program of the Department of Aging of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Links to references can be found at AlosaHealth.org.