

Self-administration of insulin in hospital

Information for patients from the Inpatient Diabetes Team

People with diabetes tend to know a lot about their condition. If you have diabetes, you will often know more than anyone else about how much insulin you need in different situations.

In hospital your medication and injections will usually be given to you by a nurse. We recognise however, that you may prefer to inject your own doses of insulin, like you do at home. This is known as self-administration of insulin.

Can I self-administer my insulin?

Self-administration of insulin can lead to better timing of doses and better blood glucose levels.

However, insulin can be dangerous if an incorrect dose is administered. Your nurse will need to assess whether it is safe for you to administer your own insulin doses while you are in hospital. It may not be safe if you are very unwell or if other changes have been made to your treatment. For example, sometimes in hospital you might be given medications, such as steroids, which may affect your blood glucose level. During this time it may not be safe for you to self-administer your usual insulin doses.



The nurse will also need to ask you some questions to check that you understand insulin, the doses you need, and how to do your own injections.

If the nurse feels that it is safe for you to self-administer your insulin, they will ask you to sign a form to confirm that you are happy to do so. If you have any questions, please ask the nurse before you sign.

If it is not safe for you to self-administer your insulin, the reasons for this decision will be explained to you. A nurse will give you your doses instead of you self-administering.

If your condition changes in hospital, (for example, if you need to have an operation) the nurse will reassess you and check that it is still safe for you to self-administer during that time.

Do I have to self-administer my insulin?

If you would prefer, the nurse can continue to give you your insulin. They can reassess you again at another time if you would like to start administering your own insulin during your hospital stay.

Can I monitor my own blood glucose level?

Yes. Though we will monitor your blood glucose using the ward meters which are very accurate, you can also use your own meter if you want to.

Tell your nurse if the blood glucose reading on your meter is less than 4mmol or higher than 12mmol and they will check the result on the ward meter.

Insulin safety

For your safety and the safety of other patients, you must do the following.

- Store your insulin out of sight in your Patient's Own Medicine Locker provided.
- Dispose of any used needles immediately after use, in the yellow sharps container provided. Do not leave needles attached to your pen. Please ask a member of staff if a container has not been made available.
- Record the dose of insulin that you gave on the insulin chart provided to you (you can also record your blood glucose readings on this chart). Please ask a member of staff if you need a new insulin chart.
- Make sure that you have enough insulin and needles, tell your nurse if you are running low.
- When you return home, store any spare insulin pens back in your fridge. The one you are using can be kept out of the fridge for up to one month.

What happens if my insulin dose changes while I am in hospital?

If any changes are made to your medication while you are in hospital these will be explained in full before you are discharged.

If you have any questions regarding your insulin dose while you are in hospital, please speak to your nurse who will direct you to the most appropriate person if they cannot help.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation

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