

Appropriate Use of Prefilled Insulin Pen Devices

Insulin pens include a number of manufacturer-unique administrative devices designed for accurate and simple insulin administration. These benefits are only realized if prefilled insulin pen devices are used appropriately.

To ensure correct use of insulin pens in your facility/community/group home, promote adherence to the following general guidelines:

► ***Before each use, check insulin pen for:***

- Correct type of insulin
- Expiration date
- Color of insulin (Insulin should either cloudy or clear)

► ***Annotate the date-of-use as insulin pen is removed from fridge. On subsequent uses, check against this recorded date-of-first-use, to ensure insulin pen is within its Beyond Use Date.***

► ***Wash your hands with warm soapy water or use a hand sanitizer prior to attaching a new needle to the pen.***

► ***Use an alcohol swab to wipe the rubber seal of the pen prior to attaching the needle.***

► ***Use a new needle for every shot.***

► ***Never access the rubber seal of the cartridge containing insulin with a syringe and needle.***

► ***Never use the same pen for more than one resident.***

► ***Prime the pen before each injection. Priming the pen means removing the air from the needle and cartridge that may collect during normal use and ensures that the pen is working correctly.***

- If the pen is not primed before each injection, too much or too little insulin may be administered.
- Prime the pen by holding it with the needle attached pointing upward. While pushing the dose knob, you should see a stream of insulin come out of the tip of the needle. If you only see a few drops, the pen is not primed.

► ***Proper storage and disposal:***

- Do not store the pen with the needle attached for safety reasons and to avoid leaking of contents.
- Prior to initial use, store pen(s) in the refrigerator at 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C). Do not use the pen if it has been frozen.
- Do not store pen in the refrigerator after initial use. Keep it at room temperature and away from direct heat or light. Throw away in-use pen by Beyond Use Date (generally 28 days after first use), even if insulin remains.
- Store individual in-use pens in a polybag labeled with the resident's name so as to not obstruct information on cartridge or the dose window. Date these in-use pens stored in med cart with the date of first use.
- Put used needles in the sharps disposal container right away after use (not in trash).

► ***To avoid serious patient harm and/or survey citations (Skilled Nursing Facilities -F-760):***

- **ALWAYS** verify insulin is in-date prior to preparing the dose.
- **ALWAYS** verify type of insulin, concentration and that dose prepared matches the prescriber order.
- **NEVER** use an insulin pen cartridge as a vial to administer insulin using a conventional needle and syringe.
- **NEVER** use an individual insulin pen for more than one patient.

Consult the package insert for specific information related to each type of insulin and/or manufacturer pen device.

[See PharMerica's Insulin Comparison Chart for additional information](#)

