

Insulin Frequently Asked Questions

What Is Insulin?

Insulin is a chemical that helps turn the food we eat into energy. People are able to produce enough insulin except when they have diabetes.

Why Do People With Diabetes Need Insulin?

People with type 1 diabetes cannot produce insulin on their own. They need insulin shots to survive. People with type 2 diabetes may need insulin injections if their blood sugar levels cannot be controlled with diet, exercise, weight loss, and oral glucose lowering medicines.

Why Does Insulin Need To Be Injected?

You cannot take insulin by mouth because your body would digest it.

Are There Any Special Times When People With Diabetes Who Do Not Normally Take Insulin Might Need To Take Insulin?

People with type 2 diabetes may need insulin injections if they are injured, have an infection, are having surgery, are pregnant, or are allergic to sulfonylurea medications.

Do I Still Need To Follow A Specific Diet Or Meal Plan If I Am Taking Insulin?

Yes. Insulin never takes the place of a healthy diet and/or exercise.

It is important to remember that the type and timing of insulin regimens must be individualized based on eating and exercise habits and blood glucose levels as prescribed by your doctor.

This handout contains general information on diabetes medication. It is not intended to replace medical advice. It is important to talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your dosage and any other questions that you may have.



Illinois Extension provides equal opportunity in program and employment. Trina Sprengelmeyer, BS and Karen Chapman-Novakofski RD, LD, PhD, 2004.