

# **WHAT TO PRESCRIBE YOUR PATIENT WHEN INITIATING INSULIN** (updated 8/2019)

*For further support, please refer patients to our monthly “Insulin Introduction” groups in **English** or **Spanish** (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 1-3 p.m.) via **Diabetes e-Consult**.*

## **Prior to starting insulin**

- ❑ Assess patient’s manual dexterity, visual acuity and numeracy skills with syringe/vial vs. insulin pens. If still with barriers, Diabetes Clinic has other aids and can help with problem-solving (eg, magnifiers for vials or pens, devices that help load a pre-set dose for a syringe).
- ❑ Instruct patient on starting insulin dose, self-titration schedule, any changes to other oral agents.
- ❑ Patients taking insulin should have a glucometer and be instructed on when to check their blood sugar.

## **Prescribing tips**

- ❑ In-use vials and pens can be kept at room temperature < 86°F. Refrigerate unopened vials or pens. See table on page 3 for details.
- ❑ Each vial of u-100 insulin contains 10 mL (= 1000 units). Rx sufficient vials based on total daily dose of insulin x 30d (or 90d)
- ❑ Each insulin pen contains 3 mL (= 300 units) and is dispensed 5 pens/box (15 mL/box = 1500 units). Though we prefer for whole boxes to be dispensed, pharmacies will sometimes “break the box” and only dispense individual pens if insurance restricts to 30 d supply. Rx sufficient boxes of pens based on the total daily dose of insulin x 30d (or 90d).

## **Prescribing from Epic**

- ❑ Under SmartSets, search for “Diabetes” and then save to your favorites. Need rx for:
  - Sharps container
  - Insulin (vial or pen)
  - Syringes (for vial) or pen needles (for insulin pens)
  - Meter, test strips, lancet device, lancets (\*\*now categorized by insurance!)

## **Other helpful links**

- ❑ ZSFG Diabetes Clinic draft insulin algorithm ► [SFGH DM2 Insulin Algorithm](#)
- ❑ ZSFG T2DM oral algorithm ► (2019) [T2DM Algorithm](#) + detailed med description
- ❑ Abridged ADA guidelines for PCPs ► [2019 ADA Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)
- ❑ Insulin Basics: Starting Insulin, Using Insulin Effectively ► [English Spanish Chinese](#)
- ❑ Provider education on insulin, talk from Sarah Kim, Endocrine ► [Initiating and Optimizing Insulin Therapy](#)
- ❑ Patient instruction on insulin pens ► [English Spanish Chinese](#)
- ❑ SFHP Medi-Cal on-line [searchable formulary](#)
- ❑ Anthem BC medi-cal on-line [searchable formulary](#)

# FORMULARY COVERAGE (updated 8/2019)

\*\*Medicare Part D coverage varies by plan. Call plan directly for details.

	Insulin	SFHN: HSF only		SFHP Medi-Cal <i>and</i> Healthy Worker		Anthem BC medical
		Vial	Pen	Vial	Pen	
<b>Long-Acting</b>	NPH	✓ Novolin N	<a href="#">PA</a>	✓ Novolin N or Humulin N	✓ Humulin N Kwikpen	✓ Novolin N (vial) or Humulin N (vial/pen)
	Lantus (glargine)	✓ *	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	ePA via <a href="#">CoverMyMed</a>
	Basaglar (glargine)	--	Not covered	--	✓ Basaglar Kwikpen	✓ Basaglar Kwikpen
	Levemir (detemir)	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	ePA via <a href="#">CoverMyMed</a>
<b>Short-Acting</b>	Regular	✓ Novolin R	--	✓ Novolin R or Humulin R	--	✓ Novolin R (vial)
	Novolog (aspart)	✓	✓ Novolog Flexpen	✓	✓ Admelog Solostar	✓ Admelog Solostar
	Humalog (lispro)	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>		(Novolog, Humalog, Apidra require <a href="#">PA</a> )	(all others require ePA via <a href="#">CoverMyMed</a> )
	Apidra (glulisine)	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>			
<b>Premix</b>	70/30 (N+R)	✓ Novolin 70/30	--	✓ Humulin 70/30	✓ Humulin 70/30 pen	✓ Novolin 70/30 vial/pen
	Novolog 70/30	✓	✓ Novolog 70/30 Flexpen	✓	✓ Novolog 70/30 Flexpen	✓ Novolog 70/30 (vial/pen)
	Humalog 75/25	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	✓	✓ Humalog 75/25 Kwikpen	✓ Humalog 75/25 (vial/pen)
	Humalog 50/50	<a href="#">PA</a>	<a href="#">PA</a>	✓	✓ Humalog 50/50 Kwikpen	✓ Humalog 50/50 (vial/pen)
<b>Syringes</b>	31g 0.3 mL		✓		✓	✓
	31g 0.3 mL in ½ units		<a href="#">PA</a>		✓	✓
	31g 0.5 mL		✓		✓	✓
	30g 1 mL		✓		✓	✓
<b>Pen Needles**</b>	32g 4 mm		✓		✓	✓
	31g 5 mm		✓		✓	✓
	31g 8 mm		✓		✓	✓

\* type 1 OK, but type 2 must have had hypos on NPH before changing to Lantus

\*\*4 - 8 mm length needles OK for all body types. Shorter pen needles may be more comfortable, but may have more chance of insulin leakage after injections. For needles > 5 mm, pinch up the skin to avoid injecting into muscle.

## ONCE OPENED—LENGTH OF USE (updated 3/14/2017—unchanged 2019)

	Insulin	Vial	In-use time	Pen*	In-use time
<b>Long-Acting</b>	NPH	Novolin N	42 days	Humulin N pen	14 days
		Humulin N	31 days		
	Lantus (glargine)		28 days	Lantus Solostar	28 days
	Basaglar (glargine)	--	--	Basaglar Kwikpen	28 days
	Levemir (detemir)		42 days	Levemir FlexTouch	42 days
<b>Short-Acting</b>	Regular	Novolin R	42 days	--	
		Humulin R	31 days		
	Novolog (aspart)		28 days	Novolog FlexPen	28 days
	Humalog (lispro)		28 days	Humalog Kwikpen	28 days
	Apidra (glulisine)		28 days	Apidra Solostar	28 days
<b>Premix</b>	70/30 (N+R)	Novolin 70/30	42 days	Humulin 70/30 pen	10 days
		Humulin 70/30	31 days		
	Novolog 70/30		28 days	Novolog 70/30 Flexpen	14 days
	Humalog 75/25		28 days	Humalog 75/25 Kwikpen	10 days
	Humalog 50/50		28 days	Humalog 50/50 Kwikpen	10 days

\*Only refrigerate new, unopened pens. Store **in-use** pens at room temperature <30°C (<86°F).

## UNOPENED—STORAGE GUIDELINES (updated 3/2015—unchanged 2019)

	Insulin vial	Insulin pens
<b>Unopened and refrigerated</b>	Unopened vials may be stored under refrigeration between 2°C and 8°C (36°F to 46°F) until the expiration date. Do not freeze.	Unopened pens and cartridges may be stored under refrigeration between 2°C and 8°C (36°F to 46°F) until the expiration date. Do not freeze.
<b>Unopened at room temperature</b>	Unopened vials may be stored at room temperature <30°C (<86°F) for a limited number of days (see table above; depends on brand). Keep away from heat and sunlight.	Unopened pens and cartridges may be stored at room temperature <30°C (<86°F) for a limited number of days (see table above; depends on brand). Keep away from heat and sunlight.