

Diabetes Education Centre

QUICK “RULE OF THUMB” FOR INSULIN ACTION

INSULIN	STARTS TO WORK IN:	WORKS HARDEST AFTER:	LASTS FOR:
Fast-acting (bolus) Insulin			
<i>Fiasp</i> (insulin aspart)	5 minutes	45 – 60 minutes	3 – 5 hours
<i>Apidra</i> (insulin glulisine) <i>Humalog</i> (insulin lispro) <i>Humalog U200</i> (insulin lispro – 200 units/mL) <i>NovoRapid</i> (insulin aspart)	10 – 15 minutes	1 – 2 hours	3 – 5 hours
<i>Toronto</i> or <i>R</i> (regular insulin)	30 minutes	2 – 3 hours	5 – 8 hours
<i>Entuzity</i> (regular insulin – 500 units/mL)	15 minutes	4 – 8 hours	Up to 24 hours
Long-acting (basal) Insulin			
<i>NPH</i> or <i>N</i> insulin	1 – 3 hours	5 – 8 hours	Up to 18 hours
<i>Basaglar</i> (insulin glargine) <i>Lantus</i> (insulin glargine) <i>Levemir</i> (insulin detemir)	1 – 2 hours	Works evenly (almost peakless)	Up to 24 hours Up to 24 hours 16 – 24 hours
<i>Toujeo</i> (insulin glargine – 300 units/mL)	Up to 6 hours	Works evenly	Up to 30 hours
<i>Tresiba</i> (insulin degludec – 100 units/mL & 200 units/mL)	60-90 minutes	Works evenly	More than 42 hours

IMPORTANT: Insulin works differently for different people. Blood glucose testing will help determine how well your insulin is working. Talk to your doctor or diabetes educator if your blood glucose levels are too high or too low.

Other Points to Remember About Your Insulin

- Injection sites are important - the fatty part of the abdomen is the recommended site for all insulin injections. Insulin can also be injected into the outer fatty parts of the upper arms or legs.
- Keep the insulin vial or cartridge that you are using at room temperature and keep all extra insulin in the fridge.
- Look at of expiry date on your insulin. Insulin can be kept at room temperature for approximately one month. Keep your insulin away from extreme heat, freezing or sunlight.
- Once a vial/cartridge is opened it is good for approximately one month.
- Cloudy insulin needs to be shaken gently before each use.
- Check appearance of your insulin:
 - Most insulins should be crystal clear.
 - Only NPH/N or premixed insulins should be evenly cloudy after mixing.
- Always discard used sharps (needles, lancets, cartridges and test strips) in a “sharps” container with a lid
 - **NOT** a regular garbage pail, plastic bag, pickle jar or bleach container.
 - Talk with your pharmacist about how to dispose of your sharps.