

# About Insulin Pens and Vials

## Insulin vials

You need syringes to inject your insulin. Use a new syringe for each injection. Ask your care team about the right size syringe for your dose.

### Storing vials

- Once you start using a vial of insulin, store it at room temperature away from direct light.
- After opening, you can only use the vial for a certain amount of time. Refer to the handout for your type of insulin for storage guidelines. Throw the vial away when it passes the storage date, even if there's insulin left in the vial.
- Keep **unopened** vials in your refrigerator. You can use them until the expiration date on the box (also known as the “use by” or “discard” date).

Your _____ insulin is good for _____ days.
Your _____ insulin is good for _____ days.
Your _____ insulin is good for _____ days.

## Insulin pens

Some pens come pre-filled with insulin. You can throw these away when the insulin expires or when you run out. Other pens use an insulin cartridge. You can throw away the cartridge, but not the pen.

Pens are made to dial an exact dose of insulin.

You need pen needles to inject the insulin. Use a new needle for each injection.

## Storing pens

- Once you start using an insulin pen, you can store it at room temperature.
- **Don't** store an insulin pen with a pen needle attached.
- Keep **unopened** pens in the refrigerator. You can use them until the expiration date on the box (also known as the “use by” or “discard” date).

## Disposal

You can throw vials, cartridges and disposable pens in the trash. **Throw pen needles and syringes into your sharps container.** You can buy a sharps container at your local pharmacy.

You can find a place to dispose of your sharps container at [safeneedledisposal.org](http://safeneedledisposal.org).

In Minnesota, if you **don't** have a sharps container, you can use a plastic laundry detergent bottle with a lid.

Make sure your container:

- Can hold objects without leaking, breaking, cracking or letting the sharps push through.
- Has a lid that seals tightly. (You should also secure the lid with tape.)
- Is labeled, “Do not recycle: Household Sharps” and placed into the garbage.

**Never** put loose needles or syringes in the trash or recycling.

**If you have questions about using your pen, please ask your pharmacist or doctor.**