Let's Talk about

Starting Insulin

3rd Edition

International Diabetes Center

Why start insulin?

The goal of your diabetes care plan is to help you manage your glucose level. Diabetes naturally changes over time, so your care plan also needs to change to help keep your glucose in target.

Your current diabetes care plan is not working well enough and you need insulin. Adding insulin to your care plan can help you feel better and have more energy. Insulin also can prevent or delay diabetes-related health problems.

Needing insulin doesn't mean you've done anything wrong in managing your diabetes or that your diabetes is worsening. Give yourself credit for what you've done so far to manage your diabetes.

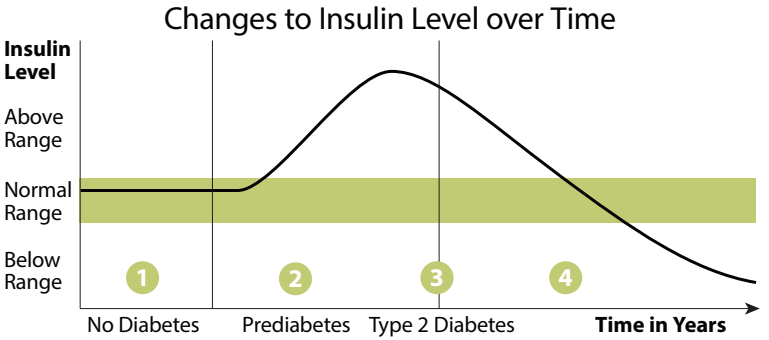
How do you know my diabetes care plan needs to change?

Your care plan needs to change since your body needs more help keeping your glucose in target. You are showing signs that your pancreas can't make enough insulin:

- Your A1C is too high (above 7 percent or your specific goal).
- You are taking the highest doses of 2 or more diabetes medicines.
- Your glucose is in target less than half the time. Or if you're using continous glucose monitoring, your time in range is too low.

How does type 2 diabetes change over the years?

Changes in diabetes over the years happen at different times for different people. The graph below shows the changes in amount of insulin that your body makes over time. If you don't make enough insulin, your glucose goes too high.



1 No diabetes

Your pancreas works well and makes enough insulin.

2 Prediabetes

Your pancreas works harder to make more insulin because your cells are beginning to resist insulin. This change usually occurs years before diabetes starts.

3 Diabetes

Your pancreas is making less insulin. Your cells are becoming more resistant to the action of insulin.

4 Diabetes progressing

Your pancreas keeps trying to make insulin but is wearing out and can't keep up with your body's needs.

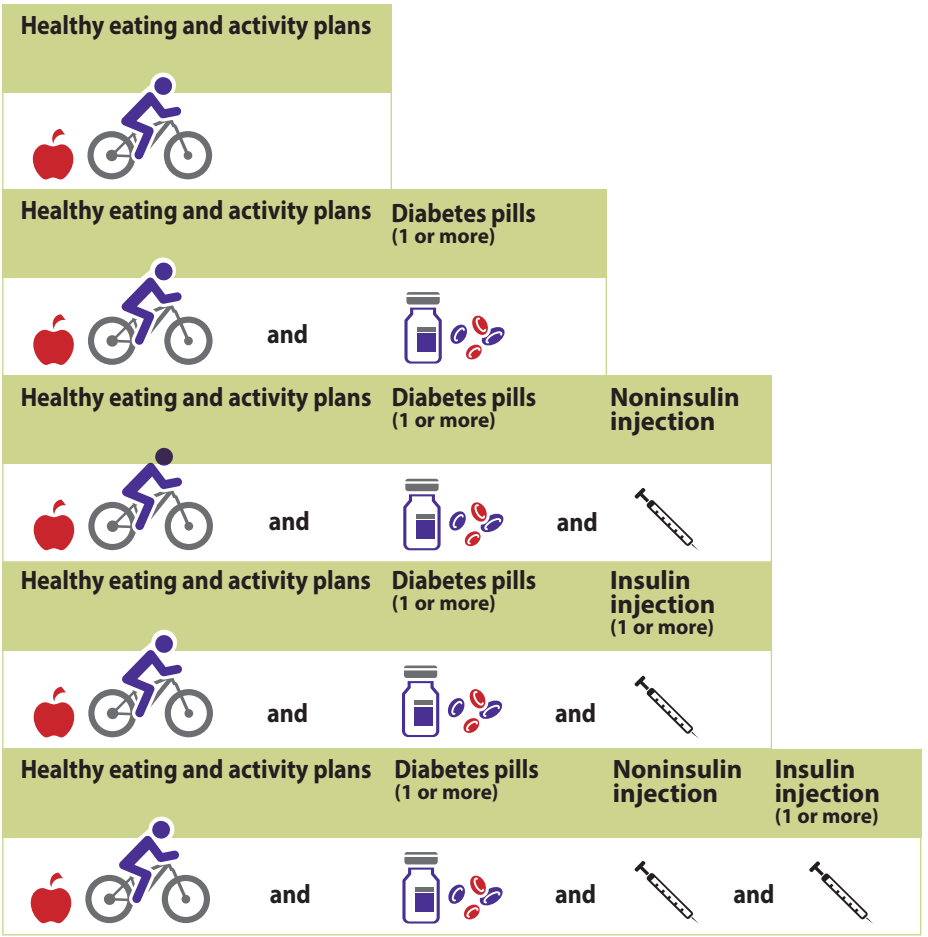
Common questions about starting insulin

You likely have questions about starting insulin. Here are answers to common questions. Talk to your care team, too.

Question	Answer
I feel embarrassed and angry about needing insulin. Should I have done something differently to take care of my diabetes?	• Your feelings are understandable. Remember, however, diabetes changes over time. • As diabetes progresses, insulin is often needed and a very common treatment to manage glucose levels.
I'm not comfortable giving myself an injection. I'm worried it will hurt!	• Insulin needles are short and thin. • Most people say that an insulin injection hurts less than sticking your finger for a glucose check.
Using insulin is a big hassle. Will needing injections change my life?	• Using insulin is a change. However, insulin supplies are easy to carry and use. You can still do all the activities you like to do. • Some insulin plans give you more flexibility with your healthy eating plan.
I'm afraid of starting insulin. What if I have low glucose?	• Your care team will talk to you about preventing and treating low glucose. • The more you learn about using insulin, the more confident you will be in using insulin and managing your diabetes.

Diabetes care plans

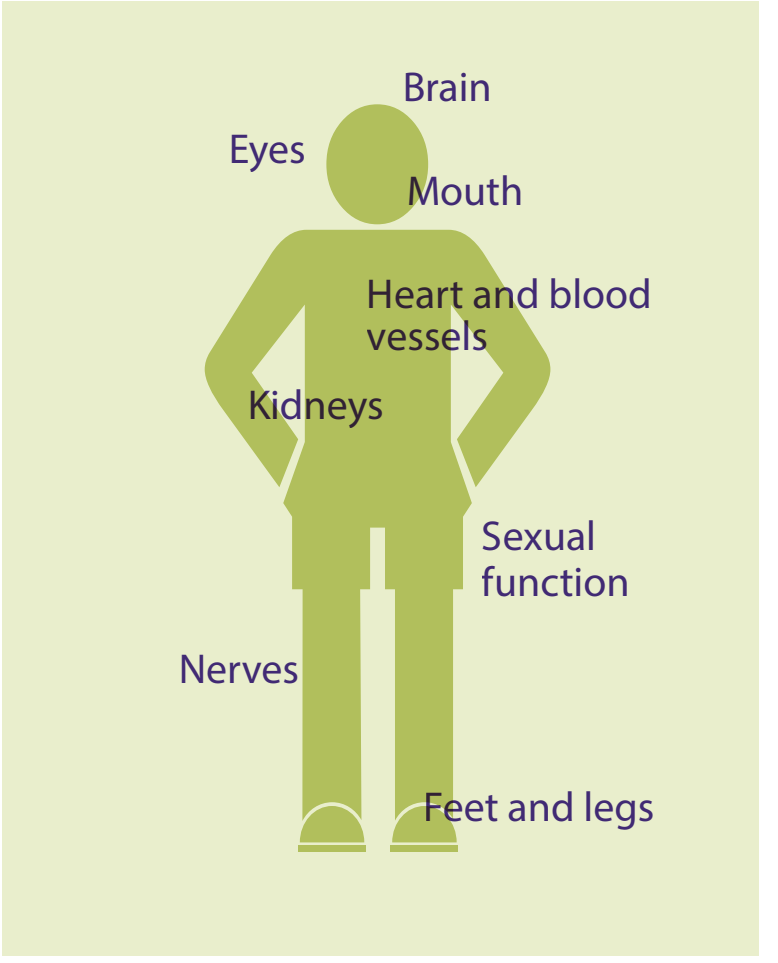
Many treatment options for managing glucose levels are available. Besides your healthy eating and activity plans, you are already taking diabetes pills or noninsulin injections, or both. You now need to give yourself daily insulin injections to help stay healthy.



Diabetes complications

Having high glucose most of the time can lead to serious health complications. Insulin, along with your healthy eating and physical activity plans can help prevent, delay or slow the development of complications.

The picture below shows parts of the body that may be affected by diabetes.



Let's get started

When you're ready to start insulin, tell your diabetes care team. Your diabetes care team will:

- Teach you how to take insulin.
- Review your healthy eating and activity plans.
- Go over any changes with checking your glucose.
- Explain any changes with your other diabetes medications.

This publication is for informational purposes only. The information is not a substitute for the care a licensed medical doctor or health care professional provides. We advise readers to seek medical guidance before making changes in self-care practices or medical therapies.

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