Fast-Acting Insulin

What is fast-acting insulin?
- Also called bolus insulin.
- Starts to work within 10-20 minutes, peaks in 2 hours and lasts for 3-4 hours.
- There are different brands, made by different companies, but they all work the same way.
- Examples of fast-acting insulin are Humalog, NovoLog, Apidra, Admelog.

What does fast-acting insulin do?
- It makes the blood sugar go down quickly.

Why do I need fast-acting insulin?
- To lower high blood sugars and/or treat ketones.
- To cover the carbohydrates in food if your child’s insulin plan requires this.
- To put in an insulin pump.

Ask your diabetes provider when you should use it.
Keep an extra supply of fast-acting insulin in school.

How do I inject the insulin?
- We will teach you how to draw up and inject the insulin.
- You will inject it into the fat layer under the skin. This gives a slow steady release of insulin into the body and allows the insulin to work at the right time to keep the blood sugar in range.
- You will inject the bolus insulin using either a syringe or a pre-filled insulin pen. You may also use bolus insulin in an insulin pump.

What is a side effect of fast-acting insulin?
- Low blood sugar
- Blood sugar less than 70
- You may feel shaky, dizzy, irritable, sweaty

How do I treat a low blood sugar?
- Check blood sugar immediately if you have any symptoms.
- If at any time the blood sugar is less than 70 or you are having low blood sugar symptoms, treat by taking 4 glucose tablets or 4 ounces of juice (this is equal to 15 grams of carbohydrate). Avoid using chocolate or nuts to treat low blood sugars as they will not work fast enough to correct a low.
Do I have to wait to eat after giving my injection?
- Give the injection and then eat right away.
- Insulin needs to work while your food is digesting.
- Fast-acting insulin takes 10 minutes to start working.

What do I do if insulin leaks out from the injection site?
- This means that you did not get your entire insulin dose.
  - Do not repeat the dose.
- Your blood sugars may go up later.
  - Check blood sugars every 3 hours.
  - Check for ketones if the blood sugar is over 240.
- Call the Diabetes Center if you have ketones.
- Begin drinking more sugar free fluids if you have ketones.

How do I prevent the insulin from leaking out of the injection site?
- Count to 5 after you inject all the insulin before you pull the needle out.
- Inject straight, not at an angle.
- Use a longer needle if this happens often.

Where do I give the injections?
- Inject straight into the fat layer under your skin.
  - This allows for a slow and steady release of insulin into your body.
  - Keep injections one inch apart.
- Inject into:
  - Lower half of upper arm
  - Side of thigh
  - Hip area
  - 2 inches away from your belly button on your abdomen
- Site rotation: Use one area for several days and then move to a new area.
What is lipohypertrophy?
It is the injury to the fat tissue when you overuse an area.
- Feels like a hard lump under the skin
- Insulin will not absorb well if injected into this lump.
- Takes 6-12 months to heal and the site cannot be used during this time.

Where should I keep fast-acting insulin?
- Before it is opened, keep new insulin in the refrigerator door.
- Once opened, insulin can be at room temperature (55-85 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Do not expose insulin to really hot or cold temperatures.
- Never store in the glove compartment in your car.
- Never freeze insulin.
- Throw it out if it becomes cloudy or has particles in it.

How long does fast-acting insulin last?
- Before it is opened, insulin is good until expiration date on box.
- After insulin is opened, it is good for 30 days. Follow the manufacturer instructions.
- Date the bottle/pen to keep track of when to open a new one.

What should I do with used needles or lancets?
- Dispose of syringes, needles, and lancets safely. People are at risk for needle sticks if not disposed of properly.
- Search the internet using the name of your city, county or township plus the words “sharps disposal”.
- Call your city, county or township and ask about sharps disposal. Some will provide a special disposal device at no cost.