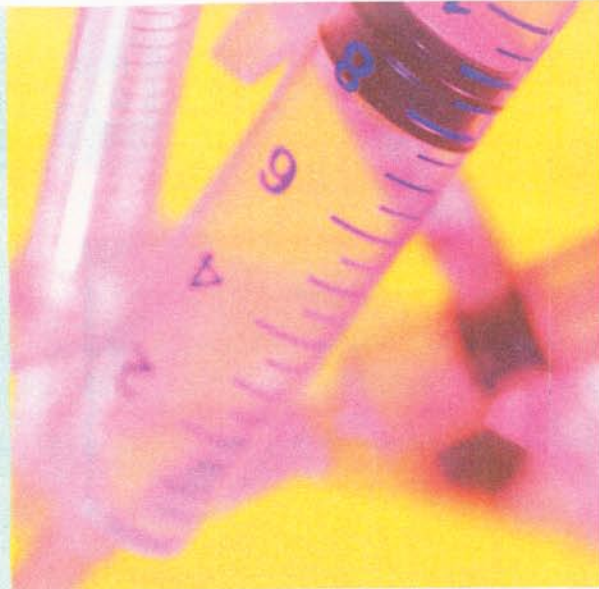


How to Take Your Best Shot

Things You Need to Know to Choose the Right Syringe

By Rose Marie Caffrey, RN, MSN, CDE, and Jane Jeffrie Seley, GNP, MPH, MSN, CDE



Before the mid-1950s, people with diabetes injected insulin using glass syringes with detachable steel needles. Between injections, the glass syringes were boiled and the needles were soaked in alcohol to keep them as germ-free as possible. To reduce the pain of the injection, people would sharpen their needles on a sharpening stone.

Today's insulin syringes provide a more comfortable injection because the needles are thinner, sharper and are specially lubricated.

All insulin syringes in the United States are for U-100 insulin, meaning that each cubic centimeter (cc) or milliliter (ml) of insulin contains 100 units of insulin. All of these syringes have an orange cap.

This may not be the case if you travel outside of the United States. Never use a syringe with a red cap or a red measurement scale with U-100 insulin. Red-capped syringes are meant for U-40 insulin, a weaker dilution of insulin. For U-40 insulin, which is no longer available in the United States, each cc contains 40 units. For this reason, make sure you take sufficient insulin and syringes to meet your needs when traveling.

There are three things you need to know when choosing the right syringe: syringe size, needle gauge and needle length.

1. Syringe Size: Capacity and Measurement Scale Increments

Using the syringe size that best meets your needs may increase your ability to draw up an accurate insulin dose.

Insulin syringes are available in sizes of 1 cc (holds up to 100 units), 1/2 cc (holds up to 50 units), and 3/10 cc (holds up to 30 units).

- The 1-cc syringe is generally marked with a line for every 2-units, that is, 2, 4, 6, 8. Some companies now have a 1-cc syringe marked in 1-unit increments. You must choose 1-cc syringes if you are taking more than 50 units of insulin at one time, or you can divide a dose that is greater than 50 units into more than one injection and use the 1/2 cc syringes that are marked in single-unit increments.
- The 1/2 cc "low-dose" syringe is marked with a line for every unit. It may be easier for you to draw up an accurate dose of insulin with this syringe, particularly if you are drawing up an odd-number dose of insulin.
- The 3/10 cc syringe may be marked in either 1-unit or 1/2-unit markings. This is the preferred syringe if you are taking small doses of insulin (30 units or less). The markings on this syringe are farther apart and easier to read. This syringe may be particularly useful if you have vision problems. For children and insulin-sensitive adults, the version of the 3/10-cc syringe

(continued on page 70)

UltiGuard Insulin Syringe Line

UltiMed, Inc., a leading U.S. manufacturer and distributor of hypodermic insulin syringes, has launched their new patented FDA-approved UltiGuard insulin syringe line.

The UltiGuard system consists of a pearlescent plastic dispenser/disposal device and 100 sterilized and packaged insulin syringes. The UltiGuard system is the first home dispenser and disposal system of its kind and provides a means of convenient and safe syringe disposal for the millions of Americans living with diabetes.

"Safety concerns about needle disposal and exposure is a growing concern," says Tom Erickson, spokesperson of UltiMed, Inc. "The

UltiGuard syringe line is the first product that makes sharps disposal easy, convenient and cost effective for consumers."

For more information, log on to www.ulti-care.com or call (877) 858-4633.

Source: UltiMed

