



# Insulin Regular

**Generic Name:** insulin regular (IN soo lin REG yoo lar)  
**Brand Names:** *HumuLIN R, NovoLIN R, ReliOn/HumuLIN R*

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## What is insulin?

Insulin is a hormone that is produced in the body. It works by lowering levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Regular insulin is a short-acting form of insulin.

Regular insulin is used to treat diabetes.

Insulin may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

## Important information

Do not use this medicine if you are having an episode of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).

Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is the most common side effect of insulin. Symptoms include headache, hunger, dizziness, sweating, irritability, trouble concentrating, rapid breathing, fast heartbeat, fainting, or seizure (severe hypoglycemia can be fatal). Carry hard candy or glucose tablets with you in case you have low blood sugar.

## Before using insulin

Do not use this medicine if you are allergic to insulin, or if you are having an episode of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).

To make sure you can safely use insulin, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney disease.

Tell your doctor about all other medications you use, especially oral diabetes medications such as pioglitazone or rosiglitazone (which are sometimes contained in combinations with glimepiride or metformin). Taking certain oral diabetes medications while you are using insulin may increase your risk of serious heart problems.

FDA pregnancy category B. Insulin is not expected to be harmful to an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during treatment.

**See also: Pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings (in more detail)**

It is not known whether insulin passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

## How should I use regular insulin?

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Do not use this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Your blood sugar will need to be checked often, and you may need other blood tests at your doctor's office.

Regular insulin is injected under the skin. You will be shown how to use injections at home. Choose a different place in your injection skin area each time you use this medication. Do not inject into the same place two times in a row.

Regular insulin should look as clear as water. Do not use the medication if has changed colors, looks cloudy, or has particles in it. Call your doctor for a new prescription.

Use a disposable needle only once. Throw away used needles in a puncture-proof container (ask your pharmacist where you can get one and how to dispose of it). Keep this container out of the reach of children and pets.

Never share an injection pen or cartridge with another person. Sharing injection pens or cartridges can allow disease such as hepatitis or HIV to pass from one person to another.

Low blood sugar (**hypoglycemia**) can happen to everyone who has diabetes. Symptoms include headache, hunger, sweating, pale skin, irritability, dizziness, feeling shaky, or trouble concentrating. Always keep a source of sugar with you in case you have low blood sugar. Sugar sources include fruit juice, hard candy, crackers, raisins, and non-diet soda. Be sure your family and close friends know how to help you in an emergency.

If you have severe hypoglycemia and cannot eat or drink, use a glucagon injection. Your doctor can prescribe a glucagon emergency injection kit and tell you how to use it.

Also watch for signs of high blood sugar (**hyperglycemia**) such as increased thirst, increased urination, hunger, dry mouth, fruity breath odor, drowsiness, dry skin, blurred vision, and weight loss.

Check your blood sugar carefully during times of stress, travel, illness, surgery or medical emergency, vigorous exercise, or if you drink alcohol or skip meals. These things can affect your glucose levels and your dose needs may also change. **Do not change your medication dose or schedule without your doctor's advice.**

If your doctor changes your brand, strength, or type of insulin, your dosage needs may change. Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about the new kind of insulin you receive at the pharmacy.

Carry an ID card or wear a medical alert bracelet stating that you have diabetes, in case of emergency. Any doctor, dentist, or emergency medical care provider who treats you should know that you are diabetic.

Insulin is only part of a treatment program that may also include diet, exercise, weight control, blood sugar testing, and special medical care. Follow your doctor's instructions very closely.

**Storing unopened vials and cartridges:** Keep in the carton and store in a refrigerator, protected from light.

**Storing after your first use:** Keep the "in-use" vials or cartridges at cool room temperature. Throw away any insulin not used within 31 days.

Do not freeze insulin, and throw away the medication if it has become frozen.

Throw away any insulin not used before the expiration date on the medicine label.

See also: [Dosage Information \(in more detail\)](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Use the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

It is important to keep insulin on hand at all times. Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. An **insulin overdose can cause life-threatening hypoglycemia**.

Symptoms of severe hypoglycemia include extreme weakness, blurred vision, sweating, trouble speaking, tremors, stomach pain, confusion, and seizure (convulsions).

## What should I avoid?

**Do not change the brand of insulin or syringe you are using without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.** Some brands of insulin and syringes are interchangeable, while others are not. Your doctor and/or pharmacist know which brands can be substituted for one another.

Avoid drinking alcohol. Your blood sugar may become dangerously low if you drink alcohol while using insulin.

## Insulin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these **signs of insulin allergy**: itching skin rash over the entire body, wheezing, trouble breathing, fast heart rate, sweating, or feeling like you might pass out.

Call your doctor at once if you have shortness of breath, swelling in your hands or feet, or rapid weight gain (especially if you are taking an oral diabetes medication).

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Tell your doctor if you have itching, swelling, redness, or thickening of the skin where you inject insulin.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: Side effects (in more detail)

## What other drugs will affect insulin?

Using certain medicines can make it harder for you to tell when you have low blood sugar. Tell your doctor if you use any of the following:

- albuterol;
- clonidine;
- reserpine; or
- a beta-blocker such as atenolol, carvedilol, labetalol, metoprolol, nadolol, nebivolol, propranolol, sotalol, and others.

**This list is not complete and there are many other medicines that can increase or decrease the effects of insulin on lowering your blood sugar.** Other drugs may also interact with insulin, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use now and any medicine you start or stop using. Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide.

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use insulin only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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