



Take a minute:
Better Discussions
for better diabetes care support

Why you should never re-use a needle: key takeaways

The Challenge: Many patients who inject insulin reuse needles at least once, with a significant proportion using the same needle 6 times or more.¹

- When reused, the needle is no longer sterile and may become duller, causing more painful injections.^{2,3}
- Needle reuse may cause lipohypertrophy, which can alter insulin absorption.^{1,3}

The Opportunity: Educate your patients on the importance of using a new needle each time they inject. Also, explain that:

- Needles should be disposed of immediately after use in a medical sharps container or another approved sharps container, and never discarded directly into household or public trash*.
- Pen needles should not be left attached to the pen or it may affect the accuracy of dosing.³

Examples of good questions to drive patient engagement:

Use this to start a brief discussion on the importance of one-time needle use and proper disposal

- I checked your refill history and noticed that you may be running low on your supply of pen needles (or insulin syringes). Would you like me to refill these for you today?

Whenever you refill a prescription for insulin, you should ask the patient:

- “Do you have enough pen needles (or insulin syringes) at home? Would you like me to refill these for you today?”

If someone tells you that their injections are uncomfortable, ask them:

- “Are you replacing the needle for each injection? We sometimes find that when patients use their needles more than once, their injections become more uncomfortable.”²

*Disposal rules and regulations vary across states and localities; refer to your state or municipality for local guidance or visit <https://safeneedledisposal.org/>.

1. Frid AH, Hirsch LJ, Menchior AR, et al. Worldwide injection technique questionnaire study: population parameters and injection practices. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2016;91(9):1212-1223. 2. American Diabetes Association. Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes – 2019. *Diabetes Care.* 2019;42(1):S1-S194. 3. Frid AH, Kreugel G, Grassi G, et al. New insulin delivery recommendations. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2016;91(9):1231-1255.

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