

Insulin Pumps

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One of the best features of an insulin pump is that one's basal insulin can be altered. Insulin pumps have a feature called Temporary Basal whereby basal insulin can be increased or decreased for a period of time. For example, one can decrease basal insulin 10 percent for 2 hours during increased activity, or increase it 10 percent for 2 hours while watching TV. Long-acting insulin cannot be altered once injected, which can lead to more frequent hypoglycemic episodes. There is also a great deal of convenience using an insulin pump in public over injections.

The basic insulin pump uses tubing between the infusion set and the skin, which is becoming outdate with the introduction of more and more tubeless pumps. Skin Tac wipes are recommended to insure good adhesion. Tubing can be more difficult than it seems. This becomes evident when the tubing is snagged by door knobs, cabinet knobs, dogs, and much more, ripping the tubing from the skin causing bleeding, skin ablation, loss of blood, and loss of insulin. Not to mention the embarrassment of blood leaking though clothing in public. Infusion sets use a soft cannula that is inserted below the skin with a needle, which retracts and leaves behind the soft cannula.

Then, there are tubeless pumps, which attach to the skin and wirelessly connect to a remote control. For children the remote control can be held and operated by an adult. A soft cannula is inserted as it is with infusion sets and tubing. Skin Tac wipes are recommended to insure good adhesion. The position for a pod or infusion set is an area with the most fat so the cannula does not touch the muscle and cause pain.

All pump manufactures and distributors provide trainers to teach people how to use their pumps. So, don't worry that it may be too complicated.

This author started with a pump with tubing. A short time later began the snagging of tubing and ripping of infusion sets leading to the introduction of the OmniPod. Using a pump with tubing is like carrying around a ball and chain. The new generation or generation II OmniPod is smaller and lighter in weight than the original OmniPod. The OmniPod remote control (PDM) doubles as a glucose meter, which is very handy. The PDM can be programmed for many

predetermined functions that save time. The pod is worn discretely under clothing on the arm, thigh, or abdomen. There are alarms that warn of various problems, including when the pod must be changed, making it safe and easy to use.

It is very important to make the right choice at the beginning because insurance companies only allow for a new pump every 4-5 years.