

Insulin

(Actrapid, Mixtard, Monotard, Humalog)

Why is this medication prescribed?

Insulin, a type of hormone that is found naturally in the body, is used to control diabetes. Insulin is normally released from the pancreas and is responsible for maintaining blood sugar levels in the body. Insulin allows for sugar to be transported from the blood to body cells where it is needed for energy.

In diabetes, blood levels of sugar are too high because the body doesn't release or use insulin properly. Insulin helps control but doesn't cure diabetes.

How should this medicine be used?

- Insulin is always administered directly under the skin by injection.
- You should use your insulin exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not stop taking insulin without talking to your doctor. Your doctor will probably adjust your insulin dose from time to time according to your blood sugar levels.
- There are different types of insulin available and they vary as to how quickly they start to work and how long they act on reducing the blood sugar level. Your doctor will determine what kind of insulin is best for you and how many units to use based on your condition.
- Insulin is available in many forms to be injected under the skin such as from a vial, disposable pen, and cartridges to be used with a reusable pen. Your doctor or pharmacist will instruct you how to administer your insulin depending on which form you have been prescribed. If you are not sure how to administer the insulin check with your pharmacist or doctor.
- The plastic syringes that you use with your insulin must be thrown away after each use. Make sure to dispose of syringes safely. Do not use them again. Do not use the insulin if it has changed color or if the expiration date on the bottle has passed. Regular insulin (actrapid) is always clear and other forms of insulin are cloudy.
- Do not use your medication if the insulin has clumped or if lumps or particles are stuck to the sides of the bottle.

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- If you are using cloudy insulin you should roll the insulin gently between the palms of your hands and turn it upside down gently several times to mix the insulin.
- When injecting the insulin make sure to rotate the injection site.
- You should administer your insulin before a meal as recommended by your doctor.

What special precautions should I follow?

- Let your doctor and pharmacist know what prescription and non-prescription medications you are taking because certain medications can interfere with the way your insulin works. If you are taking any medications especially cough and cold preparations make sure to check if these medications contain sugar in them.
- Tell your doctor your past and current medical history.
- Let your doctor know if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
- If you are having any type of surgery let your doctor know that you are using insulin.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Make sure to follow all dietary and exercise recommendations made by your doctor. Avoid the consumption of alcohol.

If you start a diet or exercise program consult with your doctor first because your insulin dose may need to be changed.

What side effects can this medicine cause?

Usually side effects from insulin are not common but you should recognize the signs of low and high blood sugar which can occur.

Signs of low blood sugar are the following: shakiness, dizziness, rapid heart beat, sweating, numbness or tingling of the mouth, pale color and weakness. If you experience any of these symptoms you should eat or drink a food or beverage with sugar in it and call your doctor right away.

Signs of high blood sugar are: thirst, dry mouth, tiredness, flushing, frequent urination and loss of appetite. Let your doctor know if you experience these symptoms.

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What other information should I know?

- § If possible store your insulin in the refrigerator. If no refrigerator is available you can store your insulin at room temperature.
- § Never allow insulin to freeze. Do not use insulin if it is frozen.
- § Discard your insulin one month after opening.
- § Make sure to keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory. It is important to measure your blood and urine glucose levels regularly to see how you are responding to insulin.

Developed by the Pharmacy Department/ Tawam Hospital

For inquiries and more information: Please do not hesitate to contact
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