**POLICY STATEMENTS**

1. For links to related policies referenced in this document, see page 4
2. Refer to [insert previous hospital Drug Alert(s) for safe use of insulin pens and dates, if any].
3. **INSULIN PENS (and the cartridges within) ARE FOR SINGLE PATIENT USE ONLY AND MUST NEVER BE USED FOR MORE THAN ONE PATIENT.**
4. Insulin pens are for **SINGLE PATIENT USE ONLY.** Therefore, each insulin pen is labeled with the specific patient information. If the label is illegible or missing, the insulin pen must be DISCARDED and a new insulin pen for the patient requested from the pharmacy.
5. **NEVER USE A SYRINGE TO DRAW INSULIN OUT OF AN INSULIN PEN CARTRIDGE.**
6. The RN will verify that there is a Physician/NP/PA order for rapid-acting Insulin.
7. Monitor finger stick (FS) glucose before meals, no longer than 1 hour before start of meal and at hour of sleep or as ordered, and PRN as indicated.
8. Administer insulin and/or oral hypoglycemic agents as ordered. A meal tray should be at the patient’s bedside prior to the RN administering rapid-acting insulin. Pre-meal insulin should be given 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the start of meal.
9. The insulin pen device will be stored at room temperature in individual patient specific bins in automatic medication dispensing cabinet (AMDC). **INSULIN PENS MAY NOT BE LEFT AT THE PATIENT’S BEDSIDE**.
10. The insulin pen is to be primed prior to each use to prevent the collection of air in the insulin reservoir.
11. To verify that all insulin is injected, keep the pen needle in the subcutaneous fat layer for 6-10 seconds after the injection with the thumb remaining on the push/button plunger.
12. Avoid IM injections with the insulin pen and instruct patient regarding best areas for injection.
13. The RN will reapply the blue cap to the insulin pen prior to cleansing and storing insulin pen.
14. For patients on contact isolation, the RN will clean the insulin pen with a disinfectant wipe, replace the cover, place in a clean plastic bag and **RETURN INSULIN PEN TO THE PATIENT-SPECIFIC DRAWER IMMEDIATELY AFTER EACH USE**.
15. The RN will begin patient teaching when insulin therapy is initiated. When training a patient with poor vision for home use, the nurse must educate a sighted person to assist the patient on the use of the product.

**PURPOSE**

To improve the accuracy of insulin dosing, provide increased patient comfort, and serve as a teaching aid to prepare patients for self-administration of insulin therapy upon discharge.

**APPLICABILITY:** All adult units

Population Served

🗷 Adult

🞏 Psychiatry

🗷 Obstetrics

🞏 Pediatrics

Care Setting

🞏 Ambulatory Care (clinic based)

🗷 Critical Care

🗷 Emergency Department

🗷 Inpatient Non-critical Care

🗷 Procedure/Diagnostic Area

🗷 Periop

🗷 Step-down

**SUPPORTIVE DATA**

1. For insulin aspart dosing and administration information, refer to [insert source of online drug information and link].
2. Each Novolog flex pen is a pre-filled single-patient, disposable multiple delivery system.
3. Pharmacy assigns a **28-day** expiration date on all insulin pen delivery devices once removed from the refrigerator.
4. Patients who are receiving this insulin via pen while in the hospital may be candidates for home administration.
5. The safety pen needle is an active device. The needle will automatically retract.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Gather equipment
   1. Disposable insulin pen device
   2. 2 alcohol prep pads
   3. Sterile insulin pen safety needle: 30 gauge
2. Perform hand hygiene
3. Verify patient identification. **Refer to [insert your nursing clinical standard for medication administration and hospital policy for patient verification]**
4. Examine the appearance of the insulin - discard if discolored or cloudy
5. Attaching the safety pen needle
   1. Remove the blue cap from the insulin pen
   2. Wipe the rubber seal with an alcohol pad
   3. Twist open and remove outer cover from the safety pen needle
   4. Screw the pen safety needle securely onto the insulin pen
6. Priming the insulin pen
   1. Dial 2 units by turning the dose selector clockwise
   2. With the needle pointing up, push on the plunger, and watch to see that at least one drop of insulin appears on the tip of the needle. If not, repeat this procedure until at least one drop of insulin appears.
7. Setting the insulin dose
   1. Turn the dose selector to ordered dose, a click will be heard for each unit dialed. If an incorrect dose has been set, dial the dose selector forward or backward until the correct number of units has been set.
   2. Check dose a second time.
8. Injecting the insulin
   1. Cleanse the skin with alcohol pad
   2. Pinch the skin at the injection site
   3. Inject straight on at a 90-degree angle to the skin
   4. Fully depress plunger until the dosing numbers count back to zero
   5. While still pressing the plunger, keep the needle in the skin for up to 6-10 seconds and then remove the needle from the skin
   6. Remove the needle from the pen by turning counterclockwise and dispose of needle in the sharps container
   7. Place the cover back onto the pen and store pen in the patient’s specific bin in AMDC after cleansing

**DOCUMENTATION**

1. Document each insulin injection by dosage, site, time, in the Medication Administration Record, and if self-administered.
2. Document patient and family teaching and comprehension via teach-back demonstrations.

**PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION**

1. Using teach-back demonstrations, instruct patient/family to
   1. Identify sites for insulin injection
   2. Demonstrate correct technique to accurately deliver insulin
   3. State need for rapid-acting insulin and when to administer
   4. State correct storage of opened and unopened pens. Opened Novolog pens may be stored at room temperature, good for 28 days from day opened. All unopened pens will be stored in the refrigerator.
2. The RN provides patient/family with the Novolog Flex Pen instruction sheet (see link below)

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Med/Surg Nursing

**RELATED POLICIES**

* [Insert link to your hospital’s Medication Administration Policy]
* [Insert link to your hospital’s Patient Verification Policy]
* [Insert link to any drug alerts from your hospital’s department of pharmacy related to the safe use of insulin pens]

**PATIENT EDUCATION RESOURCES**

* [Insert links to the instruction sheet from the manufacturer’s web site for all insulin pens used in your hospital]

**REFERENCES**

NovoNordisk web site: <http://www.insulindevice.com/flexpen/guide.asp>

<http://novonordisk.com/diabetes_care/insulin_pens_and_needles/flexpen/default.asp>

[Insert web site(s) and guide(s) of any other suppliers of pens used in your hospital]

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC clinical reminder: insulin pens must never be used for more than one person. January 5, 2012. http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/PDF/Clinical-Reminder-insulin-pen.pdf (accessed 2013 Oct 2).

New York State Department of Health. (2013) Health advisory: safe use of insulin pens. March 25, 2013. <http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/diseases/reporting/communicable/infection/docs/insulin_pen_health_advisory_3-25-2013.pdf> (accessed 2013 Oct 2).