



Diabetes Education

There are MANY reasons why lancets, pen needles and syringes are not changed frequently **BUT** sharps should in fact be changed after **EVERY** USE.

When it is considered that most health insurance plans cover these items and it takes very little time, this ounce of prevention is worth the effort.



Can I Reuse Sharp Devices?

Once a sharp device has been used, its surface is ROUGHER, the lubricant wears off and the point is duller. Any handling, such as cleaning with alcohol, removes the lubricant which lends itself to discomfort, pain or even infection. Using a new sharp each time is well worthwhile.

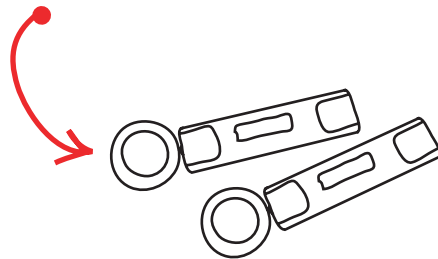
Why You Should NOT Re-Use Your Sharps

Change Sharps Frequently:

The **MOST FREQUENT** reason in favor of changing these sharps frequently is to decrease risk of infection. It is true that the most frequent cause of infection in people with diabetes is a skin infection called Staphylococcus aureus (*or Staph infection*) and also group A streptococcus, GAS. It has been shown that persons with diabetes who are infected with Staph infection may be more susceptible to the form that is harder to treat called methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus or MRSA.

Lancets:

EVERY TIME you test your blood sugar the lancet should be changed. Not only does this decrease your infection risk, it makes the process of drawing blood *LESS* painful. This is because with each use, the lancet becomes more dull and the actual piercing MORE painful. It is also not advisable to clean the lancet after use because this removes the lubricant.



← Discard your sharps after a SINGLE injection!

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Signs and Symptoms of an Infection:

SIGNS and **SYMPTOMS** of infection include redness, swelling, pain, warmth in the area, a lump under the skin, fever, pus, and elevated blood glucose levels.

If **ANY** of these symptoms occur, contact your health-care team at the first sign of any suspected infection.

Besides **DECREASING** infection risk, accurate blood sugar control and avoiding other complications are added benefits to frequently changing sharp devices.

Why You Should NOT Re-Use Your Sharps

Pen Needles:

Reusing insulin pen needles **DAMAGES** the needle. Reusing needles affects the amount of insulin delivered. This causes air to pull into the pen cartridge thus **DECREASING** the amount of insulin delivered.

Infusion Sets:

Those on the insulin pump are advised to change their infusion set **EVERY 2** Days because it is an indwelling cannula. The Centers for Disease Control recommend that any indwelling device be changed **EVERY 2** Days to prevent infection.



Infection risks such as cellulitis or scarring at the infusion site **INCREASE** the longer the cannula is unchanged. In addition, risks of mechanical problems such as clogging (*occlusion*) or kinking of the tubing increases thus decreasing insulin delivery. Another potential problem is fatty tissue buildup.

Syringes:

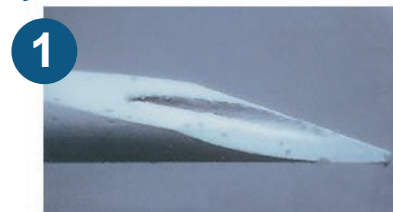
Manufacturers have made injecting easier with the creation of thin needles for syringes. This has made injections easier and **LESS** painful. A disadvantage is that these thin needles were not made for reuse. In fact there is a little hook at the end that could break off in your skin. Also, these needles are coated with a lubricant that eases the syringe into the skin; if wiped with alcohol it is removed making the next injection **MORE** difficult.

These images demonstrate the degradation of a needle tip through use.

Syringe Needle Before Use



Syringe Needle AFTER ONE Use



Syringe Needle AFTER TWO Uses



Discard your sharps after a SINGLE injection!

