



**Diabetes:**  
**A Guide to Speaking with Your Healthcare Provider**  
**About Injections**

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## **You're Not Alone**

You or a loved one may be one of the millions of Americans living with diabetes who need insulin injections to manage their condition. If you are, your doctor or diabetes educator has most likely gone through all the benefits of insulin therapy. However, while insulin is considered a common treatment option, for you and many others, the reality of taking insulin can sometimes be more complicated.

For many individuals the act of initiating insulin therapy feels like a failure. They feel as though they let themselves down and if they had been more successful with their diet or exercise routine, they would not need insulin.

Additionally, some patients may be struggling with the issue of pain, bruising or bleeding. Others may have anxiety or embarrassment about giving themselves a shot, particularly when they are in social or work situations. Or, it could be that the number of shots and the act of injecting insulin has become a frustrating and irritating aspect of their already busy day.

These concerns and feelings are very real and play a significant role in daily life. Yet, since they are associated with the very treatment that is keeping your body healthy, should they just be ignored? Absolutely not. Your overall well-being is extremely important to your health. Just like with any other health concern that affects your daily life, one of the most effective ways to improve the situation is to talk with your doctor and diabetes educator. The goal of diabetes management is to incorporate insulin therapy smoothly into your daily life rather than changing your life significantly to treat your diabetes.

This guide will discuss a new survey that shows that communication between a patient and their healthcare team is critical to maintaining your overall health and well-being. This guide is designed to help you better communicate with your healthcare providers about your daily injections and to help you play the leading role in your diabetes care team. It will offer tools that you can use to identify and tackle these issues, and make managing your diabetes a smoother and easier process.

## **How Patients and Healthcare Professionals View Injections: The Injection Impact Report**

The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) recently surveyed 500 people with diabetes who take insulin injections and 300 physicians and diabetes educators. The survey took a look at concerns about daily insulin injections and the level of communication between people with diabetes and their healthcare providers.

By looking at patients' concerns about treating their diabetes and comparing the perceptions of physicians and diabetes educators, the survey evaluates where there may be a drop in communication between the two groups.

While two-thirds of survey participants didn't experience negative issues with their insulin injections, one-third reported having some level of dread associated with taking their daily injections. Additionally, 29 percent of individuals surveyed felt that injecting insulin was the hardest aspect of their diabetes care.

With regards to communication, 52 percent of individuals surveyed acknowledged that they did not proactively communicate with their healthcare team about quality of life issues and 37 percent of respondents felt that discussing these issues would be a bother to their healthcare provider.

However, in the 300 physicians and diabetes educators surveyed, only 12 percent have had patients address their quality of life concerns relating to insulin injections either often (one percent) or sometimes (11 percent)

Whatever the reason for the communication gap, you should feel encouraged to talk with your healthcare providers about any concerns you have about injections or any other aspect of your diabetes care.

### **Be Your Own Best Advocate**

Do you have concerns about your insulin injections? If so, have you ever talked to your doctor or diabetes educator about how taking insulin injections impact your daily life? Do you have questions that you have not asked?

If so, you are not alone. Many people have questions in the back of their mind about their insulin injections, but for whatever reason, they simply push them aside and never speak up. However, your physician or diabetes educator would be the first person to tell you that communicating about all aspects of your care is extremely important. Regardless of whether large or small, the only way your healthcare provider can help is if they know there is a problem.

In fact, one of the best ways to ensure optimal health is to be your own advocate. Your healthcare providers are not with you round the clock to monitor care—but you are. Empower yourself to talk with them about addressing all your concerns, both physical and emotional, on an ongoing basis.

## **Taking Charge**

Just like with anything else in life, the best way to approach your healthcare visits is get educated and to come prepared. Your healthcare providers want to help you take the best possible care of yourself, so it's important to raise any problems that make it difficult for you to do that. Do not be afraid to bring up issues that your doctor or diabetes educator has not mentioned. Tell them what's concerning you; they may be waiting for you to bring it up.

If you have concerns about insulin injections, consider creating a daily journal that tracks your diabetes management and provides a way to note any issues you may be experiencing.

If you know you have a diabetes check-up in the coming weeks, plan to keep a diary two weeks prior to your appointment. Highlight any concerns you have throughout that week and bring the diary to your appointment. Keeping a journal will also help you reflect and gain perspective on your diabetes management.

Your diary could include:

- Your blood glucose profile for the period
- Your insulin dosing schedule
- A description of each meal with time of day included, noting skipped meals
- A description of length and type of exercise
- A description of each injection, any issues surrounding the injection and the time of day of the injection
- Social situations in which taking the injection had an impact
- Family and friends perspective on the impact of the injections
- A note about any medications you are taking
- A note about any health-related issues or stress you may be experiencing

## **Testimonial**

“Learning to take insulin injections can be a challenge at first however, the payoff is better control of your blood sugar. And good control of blood sugar means lowered risks of complications from diabetes. Talk with your doctor or your diabetes educator about any difficulties you may be experiencing with insulin injections. I’m glad I did!”

~Paula, Person with Type 1 Diabetes

## **Keep Talking**

Once you start a dialogue with your doctor and diabetes educator about your health, keep it going! Just remember, taking insulin does not have to dictate your daily life. Continue to ask your doctor about new ways to help you control your diabetes, and continue to discuss your options.

As a person with diabetes, you are in charge of managing your condition and recognizing any issues, no matter how minor they may seem. By talking with your doctor or diabetes educator and making every effort to keep the lines of communication open, your daily diabetes injections may become a whole lot easier.

*For more information on the newly released Injection Impact Report, visit [www.InjectionImpact.com](http://www.InjectionImpact.com).*