

Injections: Is this bump under my skin normal?

How to avoid lumps, bumps and knots when administering insulin

Sometimes, people who use insulin will notice a small raised area or bump under the skin at the injection site. It usually goes away on its own and is not red or painful. The medical term for this is lipohypertrophy. There are a few reasons these lumps can happen.

What causes it and what to do about it

A bump means you may have injected the insulin just under the skin instead of into fat tissue. The needle may not have gone deep enough, or you may have been pulling the needle out before the plunger reached the bottom of the syringe. Or you may be using the same injection site repeatedly.

Review your injection technique in person with your health care professional. Proper technique helps your body absorb the insulin dose better. This makes the insulin more effective at lowering your blood sugar level.

Learn how and where to administer insulin from a nurse or other skilled health professional in their office so you can see and repeat the techniques demonstrated and ask questions. With a few practice shots, most people become injection experts.

Tips for successful injections

- Rotate injection sites around the body instead of always using the same one. This helps prevent skin irritation, lumps and scar tissue which can affect insulin absorption. Keep track of your injection sites and inject about one or two inches away from a previous site.
- If you take a large insulin dose, ask your health care provider about splitting it into two injections to improve absorption.
- If it helps, pinch up the skin before injecting to make sure your dose goes into the fat tissue, not into muscle. The middle front of the upper thigh and the abdomen or belly are common injection sites, because most people have some fat to pinch in these locations. Other injection zones include the buttocks and upper arms, but they may be harder to reach.
- Needles come in various lengths, and you may need a different injection technique depending on the length. With shorter needles, you may not need to pinch the skin. Ask your health care provider which needle length and technique is best for your body type.

- Don't reuse needles. They're designed to be single-use and get duller with each use.