

Insulin Pen Needles

Policy for the prescribing of needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens

Insulin pen needles	Size length/gauge	Cost £/100*drug tariff June 18	Notes
GlucoRx Carepoint® <i>GlucoRx</i>	4mm/31g 5mm/31g 6mm/31g	£2.75	All formulary needles are universal fit and compatible with all available brands of insulin and GLP1 pens At each annual review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss injection technique. • Assess for lipohypertrophy. Ensure the patient is aware: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of the arrangements for the safe disposal of sharps. • that <i>needles are for single use</i>. Reusing needles and/or injecting through clothes should be discouraged.
BD Viva® <i>BD (Becton Dickinson)</i>	4mm/32g 5mm/31g 6mm/31g	£4.04 (90 = £3.64)	
Tricare® <i>Owen Mumford</i>	4mm/32g 5mm/31g 6mm/31g	£3.95	

Pen Needle Lengths

- The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT)¹ UK consider the **4mm needle to be the safest pen needle** for adults and children regardless of age, gender and Body Mass Index. (BMI).
- When a 4mm pen needle is inserted perpendicularly (at ninety degrees), it is long enough to penetrate the skin and enter the subcutaneous tissue, with little risk of intramuscular (or intradermal) injection.
- Injecting insulin into the muscle increases the risk of pain, bruising, bleeding and/or unpredictable blood glucose levels and severe hypoglycaemia.
- Although the 4 mm pen needle may be used safely and effectively in obese patients, 5mm or 6 mm needles are also considered acceptable in adults.
- To avoid leakage, patients should be advised to count for 10 seconds after the dose of insulin has been administered before removing the pen needle from the skin. Larger doses may be split to reduce the volume of insulin.

Patients currently using longer needles

- Patients injecting their insulin using *syringes and vials* may require 8mm or 12mm needles and it is necessary to inject into a lifted skin fold.
- For patients currently using longer pen needle lengths (8mm, 12mm), it is advisable to change to a shorter needle length (6mm or less) but only after discussion with a healthcare professional, to ensure they receive advice on the correct injection technique.
- If the patient wishes to continue to use a longer length pen needle- record the discussion in the patient notes.

Safe Disposal

- The provision of sharps bins and disposal arrangements (for the filled sharps bin) varies across the BSSE area. CCGs can provide advice as needed.

Safety needle devices and safety lancets

- These are used primarily to protect healthcare professionals against needle stick injury and so should be provided by the health care professional's employer.
- Any GP requested to prescribe safety needles or safety lancets e.g. for use in schools, by carers (who are *non-healthcare professionals*) of patients with blood borne viruses, aggressive patients etc. may wish to contact their Prescribing Support Pharmacist for advice.
- These arrangements may vary across the BSSE area.

Reference - 1. FIT UK: The Forum for Injection Technique. Injection technique recommendations, 4th Edition Oct 2016
http://www.fit4diabetes.com/files/4514/7946/3482/FIT_UK_Recommendations_4th_Edition.pdf