

## Insulin and Non-Insulin Pen Quick Reference Guide

Injectable “pens” containing insulin and non-insulin diabetic medications have become common place in the healthcare industry. Nurses need to be aware of the differences between the pens and how to correctly use these devices to avoid medication errors, which could lead to serious adverse events.

- Pens are for **single resident use** only and must **not** be used on more than one resident, even if needle is changed.
- Pens **must** be clearly labeled with resident name or other identifiers.
- Do **not** use a needle to withdraw medication from the pen as this will cause the pen to malfunction making it unusable and an incorrect dose or overdose could be administered.
- Do **not** use the pen if any part of the pen appears damaged or broken.
- Important points with pen injections (**Note: Surveyors look for these steps to be followed**)
  - 1) Disinfect the tip of the pen with an alcohol prep pad before **each** use.
  - 2) Prep the pen by doing an appropriate air shot before **each** use for insulin pens and before the **first** use for non-insulin pens, if required by manufacturer.
  - 3) After pushing the dose button to inject the medication, hold pen in skin for an additional time per manufacturer specific instructions (5-10 seconds) before withdrawing the needle from skin to allow sufficient time for entire dose to dispense from pen into subcutaneous tissue.
- 70/30, 75/25, 50/50 insulin pens **must** be “mixed” by rolling and shaking the pen 10 times.
- If “puddling” of the medication is observed on the skin it could be due to:
  - 1) Pushing the dose button before injecting the medication
  - 2) Not holding the pen in skin for appropriate time period after pushing the dose button to inject the medication
  - 3) Bumping the needle safety sheath against the skin causing a premature locking of the safety sheath and not allowing the needle to penetrate the skin

**Key Point: Do not press dose button until needle is in the skin!**

- **Storage of Pens**
  - 1) Refrigerate unopened pen - Do **not** freeze.
  - 2) Store pens at room temperature once opened.
  - 3) **Always** date pen upon opening and/or removing from refrigerator.