

Types of insulin and how they work

This chart gives you general information about the action of different types of insulin. To adjust the dose of your insulin, always use your blood glucose results and follow the directions from your doctor and diabetes educator. Remember, how insulin works in your body may be different!

| Type of insulin | Starts to work | Works hard at | Lasts | Directions |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Rapid acting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humalog[®] (lispro) Novorapid[®] (aspart) Apidra[®] (glulisine) | Within 15 minutes | 30 minutes to 2 hours | About 4 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give as directed. Rapid acting insulin works fast and lasts a short time. It “covers” carbohydrates well, providing a good match between food and insulin. You should eat within 5 minutes of taking rapid acting insulin. |
| Intermediate acting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPH or N | 1 to 2 hours | 6 hours | About 12 hours. May last up to 24 hours. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix before drawing up dose. Looks evenly cloudy after mixing. Give before breakfast and before bed (about 9 pm). |
| Long acting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lantus[®] (glargine) | Starts to work slowly | Works evenly (no peak time) | 24 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give once a day, usually in the evening. |
| Long acting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levemir[®] (determir) | Starts to work slowly | Works evenly (no peak time) | Up to 24 hours, depending on the dose. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May need to be given two times a day. |