

## INSTRUCTING A PATIENT ON INSULIN INJECTION

**Doctor:** Hi Ms. Sugar! I heard you are going home today. (smiles)

**Patient:** Yes, doctor. I am excited to go home and see my kids.

**Doctor:** Good for you. But before going home, I need to instruct you on how to inject insulin on your own.

**Patient:** Right. I forgot about that. (smiles) I was just thinking of going home that I forgot I'm sick.

**Doctor:** It's okay Ms. Sugar. I understand. You know you need to learn this, right?

**Patient:** Yes doctor.

**Doctor:** Good. Shall I begin?

**Patient:** Sure.

**Doctor:** Okay. So first of all, you need to wash your hands. After that, prepare the things you need: the syringe, the insulin vial, and alcohol pads. Check the label on the insulin bottle to make sure you are using the right kind. Then, examine the insulin in the vial for lumps, particles, or discoloration. These are signs that the insulin is no good and need to be discarded.

**Patient:** Okay.

**Doctor:** After, remove the syringe cap. Pull the plunger to fill the syringe with air volume equal to the amount of insulin you plan to inject. This air will be injected into the vial.

**Patient:** Why do I need to do that doctor?

**Doctor:** Injecting air into the bottle increases the air pressure inside the bottle. This air pressure makes it easier for you to draw the right amount of insulin into your syringe.

**Patient:** I see.

**Doctor:** Next, stick the needle into the center of the rubber stopper in the insulin bottle and inject the air. Turn the bottle upside down with the needle still inside. Gently draw the desired amount of insulin into the syringe by pulling on the plunger. Then, check for bubbles in the syringe. If you see any bubbles, gently tap the side of the syringe to allow bubbles to float to the top. Push the bubbles out of the syringe with the plunger, and then draw insulin back into the syringe to get the correct dose. If you already got the desired dose, remove the needle from the bottle.

**Patient:** Are those bubbles dangerous?

**Doctor:** No. But they decrease the amount of insulin you have in the syringe.

**Patient:** Okay. So where do I inject doctor?

**Doctor:** You can choose your injection site. You should use a part of your body with a nice fat pad - like the abdomen, thighs, buttocks, or the fat on the back of the arm. Make sure to rotate injection sites each time you inject the insulin to avoid infection or irritation. Now, before injecting the insulin, make sure to clean the area with an alcohol pad. Let the alcohol dry first. Then, pinch the skin and fat with your thumb and index finger. With your other hand, hold the syringe at a 90-degree angle. Push the needle all the way into the skin. Let go of the pinched skin before injecting the insulin. Press the plunger with your thumb using a slow and steady push until all of the insulin in the syringe is gone. Next, pull out the needle at the same angle you put in. Lastly, dispose the used needle and syringe properly. You're done!

**Patient:** Well, that was easy doctor. I hope I won't forget all those steps.

**Doctor:** I'm sure you will get used to it Ms. Sugar.

**Patient:** Right. Thanks doctor.

**Doctor:** You're welcome. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask. Take care Ms. Sugar.

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### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

1. In giving instructions to a patient, what is the best way to find out if the patient understood the instructions?
2. Why do diabetics need to inject insulin?