DON'T DO IT
Sharing Insulin Pens and Other Injection Equipment Jeopardizes Patients

In 2009, in response to reports of improper use of insulin pens in hospitals, the Food and Drug Administration issued an alert for healthcare professionals reminding them that insulin pens are meant for use on a single person only and are not to be shared. Unfortunately, there have been continuing reports of persons placed at risk of bloodborne and bacterial pathogen transmission through sharing of insulin pens.

A SIMPLE RULE
Injection equipment (e.g., insulin pens, needles and syringes) should never be used for more than one person.

BE AWARE
DON'T SHARE
ONE INSULIN PEN, ONLY ONE PERSON

About the Safe Injection Practices Coalition
The Safe Injection Practices Coalition (SIPC) is a partnership of healthcare-related organizations led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that was formed to promote safe injection practices in all U.S. healthcare settings. The SIPC has developed the One & Only Campaign – a public health education and awareness campaign – aimed at both healthcare providers and patients to advance and promote safe injection practices.

For more information, please visit: www.ONEandONLYcampaign.org

What Every Healthcare Professional Needs To Know
Recommendations for Safe Insulin Pen Use

Protection from infection is a basic expectation anywhere healthcare is delivered. Use of insulin pens and other injection equipment for more than one person poses unacceptable risks and should be considered a “never” event.

- Insulin pens and other injection equipment containing multiple doses of medication are meant for use on a single person only, and should never be used for more than one person, even when the needle is changed.

- Insulin pens and other injection equipment should be clearly labeled with the person’s name or other identifying information to ensure that the correct pen is used only on the correct individual.

- Hospitals and other facilities should review their policies and educate their staff regarding safe use of insulin pens and similar devices.

- If reuse is identified, exposed persons should be promptly notified and offered appropriate follow-up including bloodborne pathogen testing.

These recommendations apply to any setting where insulin pens and other injection equipment are used, including assisted living or residential care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, clinics, health fairs, shelters, detention facilities, senior centers, schools, and camps as well as licensed healthcare facilities.

Insulin Administration

Insulin pens are pen-shaped injector devices that contain a reservoir for insulin or an insulin cartridge. These devices are designed to permit self-injection. They are intended for single-person use.

In healthcare settings, these devices are often used by healthcare personnel to administer insulin to patients. Insulin pens are designed to be used for a single person multiple times, using a new needle for each injection.

Back flow of blood into the insulin reservoir can occur during an injection. This creates a risk of bloodborne and bacterial pathogen transmission if the pen is used for more than one person, even when the needle is changed.

The Safe Injection Practices Coalition created an easy to use check list for facilities. Similar to a risk assessment, the list contains the necessary components of injection safety for facilities to quickly assess their practices.

A copy of the checklist can be found at: www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/Checklist