

# Checklist for Patients Starting Insulin Therapy

*One of the most difficult transitions for patients with diabetes is the use of insulin. Regardless of the insulin treatment plan, patient education is necessary. The checklist below can help you make sure your patients have the information they need when they're prescribed insulin therapy. Having this knowledge may help them take control of their blood sugar.<sup>1-3</sup>*

*check here*

- Does the patient have arrangements for patient and family education (visiting nurse, diabetes center)?
- Does the patient understand how food and exercise impact his or her blood glucose?
- Has the patient been shown how to use a glucose meter? 
  - Has a health care provider watched the patient use one to make sure it is done correctly?
  - Does the patient understand how to read and interpret the results?
  - Does the patient know when to notify his or her physician?
- Has the patient been told how to recognize and treat hypoglycemia?
- Does the patient understand how insulin works?
- Has the patient been informed of the possible side effects of insulin therapy?
- Does the patient understand his or her insulin regimen?
- Is the patient aware of the importance of adherence to his or her insulin therapy regimen? 
  - Does he or she understand what can happen if the regimen is not followed?
- Does the patient understand that his or her insulin dosage may change over time?
- Has the patient been told how to handle insulin and dispose of needles?
- Does the patient know when to test for urine ketones and when to notify the health care provider?
- Does the patient know how to self-monitor during illness?
- Has the patient been given written prescriptions for: 
  - Insulin
  - Glucagon
  - Syringes
  - Glucose meter, test strips, and lancets?
- Has the patient been provided with educational materials about all of the above?

**References:**

1. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Physician checklist for starting insulin as an outpatient. <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/education/curriculum-tools/diabnotebk/diabnotebk3693.html>. Accessed January 4, 2016.
2. National Institutes of Health. Insulin injection. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a682611.html>. Updated February 15, 2014. Accessed January 4, 2016.
3. American Diabetes Association. Checking blood glucose. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/checking-your-blood-glucose.html>. Accessed January 4, 2016.