Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

INSULIN NEUTRAL AND ISOPHANE

in-sue-lin new-tral and eye-so-fane

What does it do?

Insulin neutral and *isophane* is a mixture of short-acting and intermediate-acting insulins used to treat diabetes. It moves glucose from your blood into your cells, so the glucose can be used for energy.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

How should you use it?

Insulin neutral and *isophane* should be injected under the skin. The tummy is usually the best place to inject. Change the injection site regularly so that you are less likely to get lumpiness under the skin.

Insulin neutral and *isophane* is cloudy and should be mixed before using. To do this, gently roll the vial between the palms of your hands or turn the pen upside down 20 times.

Do not stop using *insulin neutral* and *isophane* without talking to your health professional first.

What if you forget a dose?

If you miss a dose of *insulin neutral* and *isophane* and have already eaten, check your blood glucose. If it is high, follow your instructions for high blood glucose (hyperglycemia). Otherwise, skip the dose and continue as directed. If you are unsure, contact your health professional.

Can you take other medicines?

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Low blood glucose (hypo); symptoms may include sweating, trembling, feeling anxious or irritable	Drink or eat something sweet. Tell your health professional if this happens a lot or is severe.
Weight gain Pain, tenderness or redness at injection site	Tell your health professional if troublesome
Lumpiness under the skin	Change the injection site regularly. Discuss with your health professional.

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Check your blood glucose levels before meals, 2 hours after meals and at bedtime, or as directed.
- Wear medical identification (e.g. MedicAlert bracelet) saying that you have diabetes. Always keep insulin and something sweet with you.
- You will need a regular blood test (HbA1c) to check how your diabetes is controlled.
- If you are unwell, follow your sick-day plan, as the amount of insulin you need may change. Discuss this with your health professional.
- Exercise or physical activity may change the amount of insulin you need. Discuss this with your health professional.
- Alcohol may change your blood glucose levels and make you more likely to have a hypo. It may also mask your warning signs of low blood glucose. See Alcohol and Diabetes.
- Check your blood glucose levels before driving. Do not drive if you are having a hypo as low blood glucose could make driving unsafe. See Driving with diabetes
- Keep unopened insulin in the fridge. Once you start using it, you can keep it at room temperature for about 4 weeks (check the exact time on the packet for your insulin). After this, take any leftover insulin back to your pharmacy.