Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

INSULIN ISOPHANE

in-sue-lin eye-so-fane

What does it do?

Insulin isophane is an intermediate-acting insulin 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 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 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 isophane* without talking to your health professional first.

What if you forget a dose?

If it is almost time for your next dose of *insulin isophane*, skip the dose you missed and continue at your normal time. Do not inject two doses at the same time. Otherwise, inject the missed dose as soon as possible. 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.