

Giving a shot of insulin

Insulin lives in the refrigerator. Insulin is given twice a day. Give the shot of insulin soon after your dog or cat eats. If the pet doesn't take a meal, give ½ dose insulin. If your pet doesn't eat AGAIN, give no insulin and come see me.

You may or may not succeed with injections. A couple of times a year we have to euthanize a pet because it won't submit to insulin injection. Life becomes torture for the pet and the owner.

■ Preparing the Insulin.

Insulin is refrigerated when not in use. Insulin settles out of solution. Insulin should be 'stirred up' before use, but if you literally **shake** or *rap the bottle on your palm*, you may compromise the potency. So, **roll** the insulin bottle, don't shake it.

■ What Kind of Syringe and How To Use It

I prefer the "U-100" syringe of the 0.3ml volume with a 31-35G needle.

■ Preparing the syringe / needle:

Holding the syringe in your fingertips, pull the needle cap straight off the end (no twist) and the plunger-protector straight off the other end (no twist). The plunger will be *incompletely* pushed in, so you should fully depress the plunger to get the air out of the syringe. Now you're ready.

■ Loading the Syringe

Turn the recently-rolled insulin bottle upside down, and insert the needle into the rubber "top" and draw back on the syringe plunger. Draw more than you need. You will reveal a "bubble" in the insulin. That bubble is no threat to the animal. However, it will mess up the actual number of units your pet gets in that shot – because the air bubble excludes a unit or two worth of insulin. With the bottle upside down and the needle still in the rubber top, just tap the syringe gently and then push insulin BACK INTO the bottle, and **that** will expel the bubble. Push the insulin back into the bottle until you have the correct dose on the syringe.

■ Where to Inject the Pet

You need to inject the insulin UNDER THE SKIN. In most cats and dogs, when using a very short needle described above, you don't have to pinch up skin. Simply insert the needle straight into the skin, pushing gently enough to press the syringe against the skin – if the pet moves away from the needle, you're pushing enough to move WITH the pet and not lose the connection with the needle. As you are pushing the syringe against the skin, you then push the plunger and deposit the insulin under the skin.

ANYWHERE across the back or shoulders is fine for a shot of insulin. You may inject as far back as the rump area, and the tops of the back, rump, and legs – always UNDER THE SKIN and tending NOT to give it in the muscle. **Take care:** Some pets want to see what you're doing, and they will come around at an odd time to look, and you should be careful not to accidentally inject a curious eye, or nose.

■ Did I Do it Right?

Insulin has a strong, not-unpleasant "medical" smell. If you smell that after giving the shot, you may have failed to get the insulin under the skin. Since you won't know how much did or did NOT get under the skin, you have to wait til the next dose to get insulin on board.