

# The GeriJournal



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## **Insulin Pens**

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A couple of months ago it was glucometers. This month we will be replacing all Novolin pens with the new, improved Novolin Pen-4.

The 4<sup>th</sup> generation of NovoNordisk's insulin pen has a number of enhancements. The dosing dial has larger, clearer, magnified numbers. The dosing button is easier to depress, and there is an audible click confirming completion of injection. If the nurse dials too high a dose, it is no longer necessary to pull the pen apart to correct the situation. The dial can simply be turned back to the correct dose without any insulin being lost.

Nurses have expressed some concerns with the current pen. Sometimes an injection must be interrupted before the entire dose of insulin has been administered. This occurs when the amount of insulin remaining in the cartridge is less than the selected dose. The new pen does not allow this situation to occur because the nurse cannot dial a dose greater than the amount of insulin remaining in the pen.

Leakage from the injection site was another complaint, but this has been addressed by decreasing the maximum allowable dose from 70 to 60 units. Other enhancements include a piston rod which retracts with a gentle push, and a cartridge holder which disconnects without a fight.

We will be sending out new labeled Novolin-Pen 4s for all residents using Pen 3s. I would advise switching to the new device with the next cartridge change. You may prefer to change all your pens at one time. We will be sending a demonstration CD with the pens to assist the nursing staff. Your consultant can review the new features with you as well.

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## **NovoMix 30**

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No doubt you will be looking for something new to inject with those shiny new insulin pens. You are in luck! Novomix 30 has arrived.

Novomix 30 is a mixture of rapid and long acting insulins. The rapid acting component (30% NovoRapid), begins to work in 10 to 15 minutes and has a duration of action of just 4 to 5 hours. It starts to work much faster than regular insulin (Novolin Toronto or Humulin R) and does not linger in the system for nearly as long. It is therefore much less likely to cause hypoglycemia. The rapid acting component begins to

work so quickly, that the injection can be given after a meal. For a resident who has eaten poorly, this gives the nurse an opportunity to adjust the dose downward to avoid a hypoglycemic reaction.

Novomix 30 can be substituted at the same dose as Novolin 30/70. It is an excellent choice for residents experiencing high glucose levels after meals, or late afternoon or nocturnal hypoglycemia. It is the first rapid acting insulin product that does not require an LU code for ODB coverage.

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## **Pediatrix for Geriatrics**

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Liquid acetaminophen is available once again. Pediatrix drops are covered by ODB, and are supplied as an 80mg/ml solution. Let us know if you have any residents with significant dysphagia who would benefit from this dosage form.

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## **Drug Profile Sharing**

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MOH has initiated a program that gives hospital emergency departments access to people's medication profiles. This will help both institutionalized and community based seniors. Check with your local hospital to see if they have this program in place. Unfortunately, medications not covered by ODB, are not included in this initiative.

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