

Diabetes & You

ADA Discourages Needle Reuse

(NAPSA)—The American Diabetes Association (ADA) has revised its position on disposable syringes and pen needles used for insulin injections. They should be used only once.

Although insulin syringes are designed to be used once and then discarded, many people continue to reuse syringes. The most common reason is not cost; instead, convenience and reluctance to throw away something that is not yet “worn out” are the most common reasons. More than 70 percent of patients who inject insulin have insurance that covers their needles, yet many still reuse.

The ADA amended its position due to advances in technology over the past years. Because of today’s thinner needles (30- and 31-gauge, for example), if reused, the needle tip can bend and either form a hook that can lacerate the skin or cause the needle tip to break off in the skin.

Possible adverse effects may include scarring of tissue beneath the skin (a condition called lipodystrophy). Reusing needles may also result in inconsistent insulin absorption or injury to skin and tissue.

Barry Ginsberg, MD, PhD, vice president of medical affairs at BD Consumer Healthcare, the worldwide leader in insulin delivery devices, said, “We support the ADA’s revised position. During the past several years, BD has been taking steps to educate people

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about issues associated with needle reuse. Patient education and safety are our top priorities. We want to ensure that an accurate dose of insulin is delivered with no harm to the patient.”

In addition to warnings against needle reuse, the ADA points out that people who inject with an insulin pen, an insulin delivery device that is being used more frequently, should not leave the needle on the pen between injections. That can allow air to get into the insulin pen reservoir. Air bubbles in an insulin pen can reduce the rate of insulin flow from the pen. When air bubbles are present, “underdelivery of insulin can occur...even if the needle remains under the skin for as long as 10 seconds” after the plunger is depressed, the ADA’s position explains.

People with diabetes should discuss correct insulin administration and needle use with a healthcare professional.

For more information about the ADA’s revised position on reuse, visit the Association’s Web site: www.diabetes.org.