



# Patient Safety Alert

## Status

- Active
- Updated
- Resolved

## Zone Application

- Provincial
- North
- Edmonton
- Central
- Calgary
- South

26 Oct 2016

## For Action By:

- Nurses
- Physicians
- Pharmacists
- Clinical Educators
- Dietitians
- Managers

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## Diabetic Patient Education: Safe use of insulin pens and demonstration devices

Patients may be inadvertently exposed to blood borne infections and contaminants in diabetic education settings, due to:

- use of non-sterile demonstration insulin pens on patients
- re-use of demonstration pens between patients
- use of the patient's own insulin pen on demonstration devices like "dummy arms" or practice sponges and then on themselves

Demonstration devices, often provided by vendors, are also known as:

- injection pads
- injection balls
- "pyramids"



## Action

**Managers** of sites and programs providing diabetic patient education, formally or informally, will complete the following actions by **25 Nov 2016**:

1. **Provide education** to staff members that includes:
  - **Always** use the patient's own insulin pen and a sterile needle when practicing self injections
  - **Do not** dial up a dose when using the patient's own insulin pen for practice, in case the pen is primed and delivers a dose.
  - **Never** use demonstration insulin pens on patients, only on demonstration devices.
  - **Never** insert the patient's own insulin pen into the demonstration device and then into the body, to avoid contamination of the device.
  - **Clean** demonstration insulin pens and demonstration injection devices between each use with a disposable damp cloth or wipe, pre-moistened with a ready to use (RTU) facility approved cleaner/disinfectant.
2. **Discard** any demonstration insulin pens and demonstration devices that have had any risk of exposure to blood and bodily fluids, per the disposal of sharps and biomedical waste protocols. Replace any contaminated demonstration devices.

## Follow-up

Managers of sites/programs providing diabetic patient education must complete survey - <https://survey.albertahealthservices.ca/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=8lKH6p402>