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Insulin Storage

Good insulin care begins with how the insulin is stored. Insulin does not work well when it's kept for too long or is exposed to extreme temperatures. If you buy several bottles of insulin at once, keep the unopened ones in your refrigerator. (Don't put them in the freezer. Insulin clumps at temperatures below 36°F.) Before you open a new bottle, check the date printed on it. If it's past that date, don't use it -- it's too old.

If your child uses up a whole bottle of insulin in a month or less, keep the bottle you're currently using at room temperature. It will stay fresh for up to a month without refrigeration, as long as its temperature stays under 86°F. If you would rather keep all insulin in the refrigerator, warm up the insulin before injecting it. Cold insulin can make the shot uncomfortable. To warm it, draw up the right amount into the syringe, and then roll the syringe gently between your hands until it feels warm. Opened bottles of insulin will keep unrefrigerated for up to one month.

When in doubt, always follow the insulin's manufacturer's storage instructions.

Always check the insulin before you use it. Rapid- and short-acting insulin and glargine should look clear. There should be no cloudiness, little bits floating in the liquid, or change in color. Intermediate-acting insulin and ultralente should look cloudy, but you should not see any large clumps floating around. If you see any of these signs, throw the bottle away.