



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Insulin Icodec

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## **Brand Names: Canada**

Awiqli

## Warning

- Low blood sugar may happen with this drug. Very low blood sugar can lead to seizures, passing out, long lasting brain damage, and sometimes death. Talk with the doctor.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Do not change the insulin you take unless your doctor tells you to.
- This drug is given as an injection into the fatty part of the skin. This drug must not be injected into a vein or muscle.
- This drug must not be used in an insulin pump. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Do not give if the solution is not clear and colorless.
- Do not mix this insulin in the same syringe with other types of insulin.
- This drug is only taken once a week.
- This drug is a long-acting insulin (also known as basal insulin). Do not take this drug with another type of long-acting insulin. If you are not sure which type of insulins can be taken together, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to help control blood sugar in people with diabetes.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.

- If you have any of these health problems: Acidic blood problem or low blood sugar.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.
- If the patient is a child. Do not give this drug to a child.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Low blood potassium may happen with this drug. If not treated, this can lead to a heartbeat that is not normal, very bad breathing problems, and sometimes death. Talk with the doctor.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- Do not drive if your blood sugar has been low. There is a greater chance of you having a crash.
- Some diabetes drugs like pioglitazone or rosiglitazone may cause heart failure or make it worse in people who already have it. Using insulin with these drugs may increase this risk. If you also take one of these drugs, talk with the doctor.
- Be sure you have the right insulin product. Insulin products come in many containers like vials, cartridges, and pens. Be sure that you know

how to measure and get your dose ready. If you have any questions, call your doctor or pharmacist.

- It may be harder to control blood sugar during times of stress such as fever, infection, injury, or surgery. A change in physical activity, exercise, or diet may also affect blood sugar.
- Wear disease medical alert ID (identification).
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol or take products that have alcohol in them.
- Do not share your insulin product with another person. This includes any pens, cartridge devices, needles, or syringes, even if the needle has been changed. Sharing may pass infections from one person to another. This includes infections you may not know you have.
- If you have diarrhea, are throwing up, or do not eat as much as normal, talk with your doctor. If you want to make changes to your diet or exercise more than normal, talk with your doctor. You may need to change how much insulin you use.
- Do not stop taking this drug without talking with your doctor. Using doses that are too low or stopping this drug may raise the risk of high blood sugar or an acidic blood problem.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If you may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs

or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been life-threatening.
- Signs of low potassium levels like muscle pain or weakness, muscle cramps, or a heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Irritation where the shot is given.
- Thick skin, pits, or lumps where the injection was given.
- Swelling.
- Sweating a lot.
- Low blood sugar may happen. Signs may be dizziness or passing out, blurred eyesight, mood changes, slurred speech, headache, feeling sleepy or weak, shaking, fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, sweating, or seizures. Call the doctor right away if any of these signs happen. Follow what you have been told to do if low blood sugar happens. This may include taking glucose tablets, liquid glucose, or some fruit juices.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- This drug is only taken once a week.
- Take the same day each week.
- Take with or without food.
- Wash your hands before use.
- Remove all pen needle covers before injecting a dose (there may be 2). If you are not sure what type of pen needle you have or how to use it, talk with the doctor.
- Move site where you give the shot each time.
- Do not give into skin that is thickened, or has pits or lumps.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if the pen is damaged.
- If you have trouble seeing, have someone else give the shot.
- This product may make a clicking sound as you prepare the dose. Do not prepare the dose by counting the clicks. Doing so could lead to using the wrong dose.
- Take off the needle after each shot. Do not store this device with the needle on it.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles

or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

- Keep the cap on the pen when not in use.
- Do not move this drug from the pen to a syringe.
- Do not mix with other liquids.
- Follow the diet and exercise plan that your doctor told you about.

## **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it. After taking a missed dose, take your next dose on your normal day as long as there are at least 4 days between doses.
- If there are less than 4 days between when you take a missed dose and your next dose, start a new schedule based on the day the missed dose is taken.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store unopened pens in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- You may store unopened pens at room temperature for up to 12 weeks. If stored at room temperature, throw away any part not used after 12 weeks.
- After opening, store at room temperature or in a refrigerator. Throw away any part not used after 12 weeks.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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