

Pump failure and time off your pump

Information for patients and families

What is the risk of not being on my pump?

Insulin pumps use rapid acting insulin. This means that if you take your pump off or it stops working, you will run out of insulin within about 4 to 6 hours. Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) can develop quickly when you are not getting enough insulin. To prevent DKA, you should have a plan for how you will replace your basal insulin while you are off the pump.

What supplies will I need when I am off the pump?

- ✓ Long acting insulin (make sure to check the expiry date)
- ✓ Syringes or insulin pens and pen needles to inject your insulin
- ✓ An up-to-date record of your total daily basal insulin, insulin-to-carbohydrate ratio and correction factor

What should I do if I am off of my pump?

1. If your pump stops working, call the pump company immediately. Consider saving this number in your phone.
2. If you are off your pump for more than 60 to 90 minutes, you need to replace your basal insulin using pens or syringes.
3. To replace your basal insulin, you have two options. You can take rapid insulin every 4 hours or take long acting insulin once or twice per day.

Option A – Rapid acting insulin

1. Use the same rapid insulin you use in your pump.
2. Find your total daily basal insulin: _____ units.
3. Divide your total basal insulin by 6 and take _____ units every 4 hours.
4. Use your insulin-to-carbohydrate ratio and correction factor for meals and to correct high blood sugars.
5. You can either use syringes or insulin pens to take your insulin.

For example: If your total daily basal insulin on the pump is 18 units, divide by 6 and take 3 units every 4 hours to replace your basal insulin.

Option B – Long acting insulin

1. Use long acting insulin.
2. Find your total daily basal insulin: _____ units.
3. Divide your total basal insulin by 2 and take _____ units in the morning and at bedtime or you can take the whole dose one time per day.
4. Use rapid insulin and your insulin-to-carbohydrate ratio and correction factor for meals and to correct high blood sugars.

What should I do when I restart my pump?

When you restart the pump you may need to do a temporary basal rate until the long acting insulin you took runs out. Try reducing your basal rate by 25 to 35 percent for 8 hours to prevent hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).