

ASSISTING DIABETIC CLIENTS

A caregiver may assist a diabetic client with gathering supplies and the insulin, BUT the caregiver **MAY NOT**:

- Draw the insulin up into the syringe, or
- Inject the insulin.

If your client cannot see the markings on the syringe in order to draw up an accurate amount of insulin, even with a magnifying glass, then the client needs to ask the doctor for a prescription for a pre-filled, pre-dosed syringe. The caregiver may double-check the dose of insulin in the syringe after a client has drawn it up into the syringe, or "clicked" the pre-filled, automatic-dosing syringe.

A caregiver may assist a diabetic client with checking blood sugar levels by gathering supplies and doing everything **EXCEPT**

- the finger stick.

The above guidelines are per the **Rules of the Idaho State Board of Nursing**. It is exceedingly important that all of our agency-paid caregivers (even if they are relatives of the client) abide by these guidelines.

In order to safely help your diabetic client and follow the State regulations, if a client's hands shake a lot or are too weak to complete the whole task alone, a caregiver may guide the client's hand to the spot the client chooses, and **help support the client's hand** (with the caregiver's hand over the client's) as **the client** pushes the needle into the skin and injects the insulin. The nurse needs to instruct and observe the caregiver assist in this way, and "sign off" the caregiver for each client the caregiver helps.

For your client's and your own safety, be sure to **wash your hands** with soap and warm water for 30 seconds before gathering supplies and assisting the client with these tasks. And **wear gloves!** (Medicaid will pay for gloves if the doctor orders them, stating that they are needed for assistance with diabetic care/skin care.) Wash your hands after you take the gloves off, too. Turn the gloves inside-out as you take them off and immediately place them in a plastic-bag-lined garbage can.

DO NOT RECAP insulin syringes. When it's time for insulin, place a sharps container right beside the client so the syringe can be dropped into it immediately after use. Do not lay it down and pick it up again, since this increases the chance of sticking yourself. A hard plastic bottle (like liquid dish or laundry detergents come in) works great for a sharps container. Tape it securely shut when it is full, and place it in the garbage.

BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL not to stick yourself with a used needle since your client may have a communicable disease like Hepatitis C that you do not want to get. If you do stick yourself, immediately swab the area with an alcohol swab and let it bleed for a minute or two. Then call the office.

Note: the pre-measured syringes mentioned above do require the used needle to be re-capped in order to twist it off and dispose of it. Steady the needle cap on a table or other hard surface as you insert the needle to reduce the risk of sticking yourself.