Plumb's Drug Handouts

Insulin, Lente

(***inn***-*suh-lin lenn-tay*)

Key Information

- Lente insulin is an intermediate-acting insulin used to treat diabetes mellitus. It is injected under the skin (*subcutaneously*).
- Thoroughly shake the vial or pen cartridge until the insulin mixes evenly and forms a uniform, milky suspension. Allow any foam to settle before using.
- Do NOT use if insulin is discolored or if clumps or particles remain after shaking.
- Insulin doses should be given at the same time(s) each day and administered immediately after a meal.
- Do not give insulin if your animal is not eating. Contact your veterinarian if your animal is not eating.
- Only use U40 syringes with lente insulin. If using an insulin pen, only use pen needles designed for the device.
- Always double-check the dose in the syringe or pen before injecting. Overdoses can be fatal.
- Rotate injection sites with each dose.
- Do NOT reuse needles or syringes. Place used needles and syringes in a sharps disposal container immediately after use.
- Contact your veterinarian if you notice any signs of low blood sugar, including weakness, lack of energy, stumbling, behavior changes, muscle twitching, or seizures.

Note: The purpose of this information sheet is to answer commonly asked questions. It does not contain all available information for this medication and is not a substitute for medical advice provided by your veterinary healthcare team.

Description	• Intermediate-acting insulin • Injectable suspension that is available as vials or pens • Lente insulin suspensions contain 40 units of insulin per mL
Other common names	Porcine zinc insulin, *VetPen*, *vetsulin*
Uses	FDA-approved uses in animals: • Treatment of diabetes mellitus in dogs and cats At the discretion of your veterinarian, this medication may be used in different species (extra-label use).
Before this medication is given	No medication is 100% safe in all patients. Discuss with your veterinarian: • Any other medications or supplements your animal is taking • Any conditions or diseases your animal currently has or has had in the past • Any side effects your animal has had to medications in the past • The risks of using this medication if your animal is pregnant or nursing
Warnings for animals	Do not use in animals: • That are allergic to lente insulin, pork, or pork products • That are not eating • With low blood sugar (*hypoglycemia*) Certain medications are not allowed in some animal competitions. Check rules and regulations when your animal is taking a medication.

Warnings for humans	• Wash your hands after handling any medication.
	• To prevent needlestick injuries:
	  - Dispose of used needles, syringes, and pen needles immediately after use.
	  - Do not recap syringes with needles before disposal.
	• Needlestick injuries can lead to pain and infection. If you experience a needlestick injury, contact your physician.

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How do I give this medication?	• Thoroughly shake the vial or pen cartridge until the insulin mixes evenly and forms a uniform, milky suspension. Allow any foam to settle before using. • Do **NOT** use if insulin is discolored or if clumps or particles remain after shaking. • **Only use U40 syringes or pen needles specifically designed for your animal's pen.** • Do **NOT** reuse needles, syringes, or pen needles. • Always double-check the dose in the syringe before you inject your animal. Overdoses can be fatal. • Inject under the skin at the same time(s) each day immediately after a meal. • If liquid is leaking from the needle after administration or if a partial dose was given, **do not** give another dose. Wait and give your animal their usual dose at the next scheduled time. • Contact your veterinarian if you have any questions about how to administer insulin. • Do not give insulin if your animal is not eating. Contact your veterinarian. • It is common for your veterinarian to adjust the insulin dose over time. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*
Side effects	**Common** – contact your veterinarian if any of these signs are severe, continue to occur, or worsen over time: 4 Skin reactions at the injection sites, such as lumps or thickening of the skin. Rotate injections sites to help prevent skin reactions. **Severe** – stop the medication and contact your veterinarian or local emergency veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Weakness, lack of energy, stumbling, behavior changes, muscle twitching, or seizures. These may be signs of low blood sugar (*hypoglycemia*). • Hives, swollen head or neck, noisy breathing, or trouble breathing. Although it is rare, these may be signs of an allergic reaction. **Always be prepared for an unexpected hypoglycemic event** and have a source of real sugar on hand, such as honey, table sugar, corn syrup, or liquid glucose packets. **Do NOT give any sugar substitutes, such as xylitol or aspartame, as these may be toxic.** In case of low blood sugar: • **If your animal is unconscious or having a seizure, this is a medical emergency**. Take your animal to the veterinarian immediately. • **If your animal is conscious and able to swallow**, rub approximately 1 tablespoon of corn syrup or honey on your animal's gums until they are alert enough to eat. Then feed a meal and contact your veterinarian.
How will I know it's working?	• This medication should start working within 1 to 2 hours, but you may not be able to see the effects of this medication. • Your veterinarian will need to run follow-up tests to see how well this medication is working. *Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's signs worsen or do not improve.*
How long will the medication effects last?	• Lente insulin is an intermediate-acting insulin. Its effects may last for 8 to 24 hours.
How long do I give it for?	This medication can be given for different lengths of time but is usually a lifelong medication. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. • Make sure to refill the prescription to avoid interruptions in treatment. • Consider keeping a backup vial or pen at home in case one breaks or there is a delay with refilling the prescription.
Overdose	An overdose of insulin can cause a life-threatening drop in your animal's blood sugar. Signs of low blood sugar include weakness, lack of energy, stumbling, behavior changes, muscle twitching, seizures, or coma. If you witness or suspect an overdose, call your veterinarian or an animal-specific poison control center (consultation fee applies):

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	• **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**: (888) 426-4435 • **Pet Poison Helpline**: (855) 764-7661 *Have the product or label with you if possible.*
Missed dose	• A missed dose may lead to signs of high blood sugar, such as excess thirst and urination, but is not life threatening. - Contact your veterinarian as soon as possible for advice on when to give the next dose. • If you cannot reach your veterinarian and your animal is eating and acting normally, give the usual dose at the next regularly scheduled time. • **Do not double up doses, as this can cause a life-threatening overdose**.
Storage	• Store vials and pens in the refrigerator. • Store vials and unopened cartridges in an upright position. • Protect from light and heat. • Do not freeze. Discard if insulin has frozen. • Keep insulin, needles, and syringes out of reach of children and animals.
Disposal	**Discard insulin 42 days after first puncture.** **Insulin disposal:** Do **not** flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. Options for disposing of unused or expired medications include: • Drug take-back sites: This is preferred whenever possible. To find a site near you, contact your local law enforcement or waste management authorities. • Home disposal: Mix the medication in with coffee grounds or kitty litter, seal the mixture in a plastic bag, and throw it away in the trash. *Do **not** save leftover medication or give it to others to use.* **Disposal of used needles and syringes:** • Dispose of used needles and syringes in a sharps container. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help you obtain sharps containers. • Dispose of sharps containers when approximately ¾ full. Check with your local trash removal services or health department to see which disposal methods are available in your area.
Questions?	Talk to your veterinarian.

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