



Reference: AMD14102025/01

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NOTICE: UPDATE ON INSULIN AVAILABILITY

The National Department of Health (NDoH) is committed to ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare for diabetic patients through ensuring the availability of safe, effective, and cost-effective medicines, in the appropriate dosage form at the appropriate level of care.

As previously communicated, despite efforts, responsive bids were only received for specific insulin presentations, notably vials of isophane insulin, soluble insulin, biphasic insulin, and analogue insulin pen sets for the HP06-2024SVP; HP06-2024SVP/01; HP06-2024SVP/02 tenders.

The following previous insulin circulars have been issued:

- 1) Availability of Insulin Pen Sets dated 06 May 2024;
- 2) Guidance on switching from insulin pen sets to insulin vials, and human insulin products to insulin analogue products, dated June 2024; and
- 3) Ultra-fast-acting and long-acting insulin analogue interim essential medicine list status dated October 2024.

Novo Nordisk has informed the NDoH that they are currently experiencing temporary supply constraints on human insulin 10ml vials (*see table 1*). These constraints are anticipated to persist for approximately 6–8 weeks, due to local stock pressure and high demand across participating authorities. Novo Nordisk is committed to supply the monthly estimates awarded on the HP06-2024SVP, and stock supply will stabilise from January 2026.

Table 1: Human insulin 10 ml vials contracted to Novo Nordisk:

Contract	NSN	Medicine Pack short Description	Brand As Per Contract	Supplier Name
HP06-2024SVP	189710587	Insulin, Biosynthetic, Human, Isophane	PROTAPHANE HM	Novo Nordisk (pty) Ltd
HP06-2024SVP	189711634	Insulin, Biosynthetic, Human, Biphasic 30/70	ACTRAPHANE HM	Novo Nordisk (pty) Ltd
HP06-2024SVP	189710585	Insulin, Biosynthetic, Human, Soluble	ACTRAPID HM	Novo Nordisk (pty) Ltd

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Table 2 below lists the alternative insulin products available on national contract, that can be utilised during this period.

Table 2: Alternative insulin products on tender

Contract	NSN	Medicine Pack short Description	Brand As Per Contract	Supplier Name	Price
HP06-2024SVP	222000179	Insulin, Analogue, Human, Long Acting; 100IU/ml; pen, prefilled; 3 ml	OPTISULIN SOLOSTAR 3.64 MG/ML INJ 3 ML x 5	Sanofi-Aventis SA (Pty) Ltd	R39.53
HP06-2024SVP	222000181	Insulin, Analogue, Human, Ultrafast Acting; 100IU/ml; pen, prefilled; 3 ml	APIDRA SOLOSTAR 100 IU/ML INJ 3 ML x 5	Sanofi-Aventis SA (Pty) Ltd	R75.18
HP06-2024SVP/02	222001641	Insulin, Analogue, Human, Biphasic 30/70; 100IU/ml; pen, prefilled; 3 ml	NOVOMIX 30	Novo Nordisk (pty) Ltd	R69.93
HP06-2024SVP	189710585	Insulin, Biosynthetic, Human, Soluble; 100IU/ml; injection; 10 ml	Biosulin R	Shanur Healthcare (Pty) Ltd	R38.51

Note: Insulin analogue pen sets that are available on National Contract have been added to the essential medicines list (EML) temporarily. This temporary update to the EML is to assist provinces in the procurement of these insulin pens in the absence of human insulin products. The inclusion of insulin analogues (not product specific) in the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML) in the long-term is still being further considered by the National Essential Medicines List Committee, particularly in terms of cost and availability.

Where insulin products are changed; enhanced patient counselling and adherence monitoring is required to ensure appropriate dosing, administration and use. Please see [Annexure A](#) to help guide switching from human insulin pen sets to analogue insulin pen sets.

Provinces and Healthcare Facilities are requested to distribute and communicate this information in consultation with the Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committees. Kindly share with all healthcare professionals and relevant stakeholders.

Kind regards,


MS KHADIJA JAMALOODIEN
CHIEF DIRECTOR: SECTOR-WIDE PROCUREMENT
DATE: 17/10/2025

Annexure A

Switching from human insulin to analogue pen sets

Credit and thanks to the Division of Endocrinology, Groote Schuur Hospital and University of Cape Town; and the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness.)

Patients switching from biphasic human insulin (product: Actraphane HM®) to biphasic analogue insulin pen set (product: Novomix 30®)

**For access information see section below: Access to stock and section 36 approval*

- **Dosing:** When switching from a biphasic human insulin product to a biphasic analogue insulin, dosing switch would be on a unit per unit basis.
- **Dosing timing:** Administered immediately before a meal. Eat a meal or snack within 10 minutes of insulin injection to avoid low blood sugar.
- **Monitoring:** Increased monitoring may be required at time of switching as guided by healthcare provider.

Patients switching from fast-acting human insulin (product: Actrapid HM®); to ultra-fast-acting analogue insulin pen set (product: Apidra®)

- **Dosing:** When switching from a fast-acting human insulin product to an ultra-fast analogue, dosing switch would be on a unit per unit basis.
- **Dosing timing:** Administered with a meal or within 15 minutes before or after starting a meal.
- **Monitoring:** Increased monitoring may be required at time of switching as guided by healthcare provider.

Patients switching from intermediate or long-acting human insulin (product: Protaphane HM®) to long-acting analogue insulin pen set (product: Optisulin Solostar®)

- **Dosing:** When switching from a treatment regimen with an intermediate or long-acting insulin to a regimen with a long-acting analogue insulin, **reduce the dose by 20%.**
- **Dosing timing:** Administer once daily at the same time every day.
- **Monitoring:** Increased monitoring may be required at time of switching as guided by healthcare provider.