American Diabetes Association®

Breaking Through Therapeutic Inertia

Recognizing when to intensify treatment and when insulin may be appropriate

What is Therapeutic Inertia?

Therapeutic inertia occurs when treatment is not initiated or intensified despite evidence that individualized glycemic goals are not being met.

Potential Contributors Include:

- Concerns about hypoglycemia
- Perceived treatment complexity
- Limited visit time
- Individual's reluctance or fear of insulin
- Clinician uncertainty regarding initiation

When Should You Consider Insulin?

Consider insulin when individuals:

- Have symptomatic or marked hyperglycemia
- Show evidence of catabolism or insulin deficiency
- Are not meeting individualized glycemic goals despite appropriate noninsulin therapy
- Have clinical circumstances or preferences that make basal insulin an appropriate next step



Where Once-Weekly Insulin May Fit

Potential advantages of a once-weekly approach:

- Reduced injection frequency
- Simplified dosing schedule
- Opportunity to reduce treatment burden
- May help individuals maintain their treatment routine

Clinical Pearl

When insulin is indicated, timely initiation, education, and follow-up can help individuals achieve individualized glycemic goals.

This infographic is based on recommendations from the ADA's *Standards of Care in Diabetes—2026*