Insulin pens are becoming more popular as they offer potential benefits including convenience, ease of use, improved dose accuracy, reduced fear of injections and limit of waste. Many of the new concentrated insulin products are available only as insulin pens. However, the use of insulin pens has been associated with problems, including the risk for transmission of bloodborne pathogens if insulin pens are used for multiple patients, even if the needle is changed. Errors in insulin pen administration technique by patients and healthcare professionals have been reported. In order to ensure safe insulin pen administration and reduce the potential for survey tags related to medication errors and infection control, adequate training and policies must be in place.

SAFE use of insulin PENS:

- Use only one PEN per PERSON
- Even if the pen needle is changed, regurgitation of blood into the insulin cartridge can occur after injection creating a risk of bloodborne pathogen transmission if the pen is used for more than one person
- Never draw up doses out of the pen using a syringe as it can result in under dosing or over dosing (with concentrated insulins)
- Train all new hires administering insulin on policies
- Train on proper operation of each individual pen prescribed. Include all important steps:
  - Attach the needle
  - Prime the pen before each dose
  - Dial the dose
  - Press the button completely and leave the needle in the skin for 5 to 10 seconds to deliver the full dose
  - Discard the needle
- Do not reuse pen needles, it can lead to pain or infection
- Do not leave needles on the pen due to increased risk of air bubbles, leaks, or clogging
- Don’t forget to include an order for pen needles with the prescription for a pen
- Pen needles are made to OSHA safety standards. Cononus stocks the BD AutoShield Duo Safety needle that passively conceals needle front and back after use to reduce exposure and it fits all pen devices.

For further assistance with developing or strengthening your current insulin pen administration protocols, please contact your Cononus Pharmacist or Consultant.