



Insulin Aspart: Fiasp® versus Novorapid®

The UK Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group (<https://pharmacysafety.org/>) recently issued a 'Share and Learn' resource in relation to Insulin Aspart, as a result of three separate incidents in which children who had been prescribed Insulin Fiasp®, were dispensed Insulin Novorapid® instead.

Novorapid® and Fiasp® are both indicated in the treatment of diabetes mellitus in adults, adolescents and children aged one year and above.

They both contain Insulin Aspart as the active ingredient, in the same strength, 100 units/ml.

Both are manufactured by Novo Nordisk, and therefore have similar packaging.

It is very important to note that they are not biosimilars, they are not interchangeable and they are not bioequivalent.

Fiasp® is a reformulated version of Insulin Aspart which was introduced to the Irish market in late 2017.

Fiasp® is absorbed faster by the body than Novorapid® and has a shorter duration of action.

Compared to Novorapid®, Fiasp® contains two additional excipients: nicotinamide (also known as niacinamide or vitamin B3) and L-arginine hydrochloride (an amino acid). The addition of nicotinamide is intended to result in a faster initial absorption of Insulin Aspart following subcutaneous injection. The addition of L-arginine hydrochloride should support stabilisation of the Fiasp® formulation.

Due to its faster absorption, Fiasp should be injected just before a meal. The SPC states "up to two minutes before the start of the meal, with the option to administer up to 20 minutes after starting the meal".

The UK Patient Safety Group has identified the following actions to prevent errors occurring:

- Communicating with colleagues that the products are not interchangeable, and that the patient should not be switched between brands;

- Checking with patients/ patients' representatives or prescriber to confirm the product dispensed was the expected product;
- Making patients aware that there are two versions of insulin Aspart and asking them to check before using the product.

Reference:
<https://pharmacysafety.org/insulin-fiasp-versus-novorapid/>

