

# ABSOLUTE SCOOP

## DID YOU KNOW?

- One patient getting sliding scale insulin QID will cost 28 minutes in nursing time
- Sliding scale can open up facilities to infection control citations regarding the use of glucose monitors

### SLIDING SCALE INSULIN

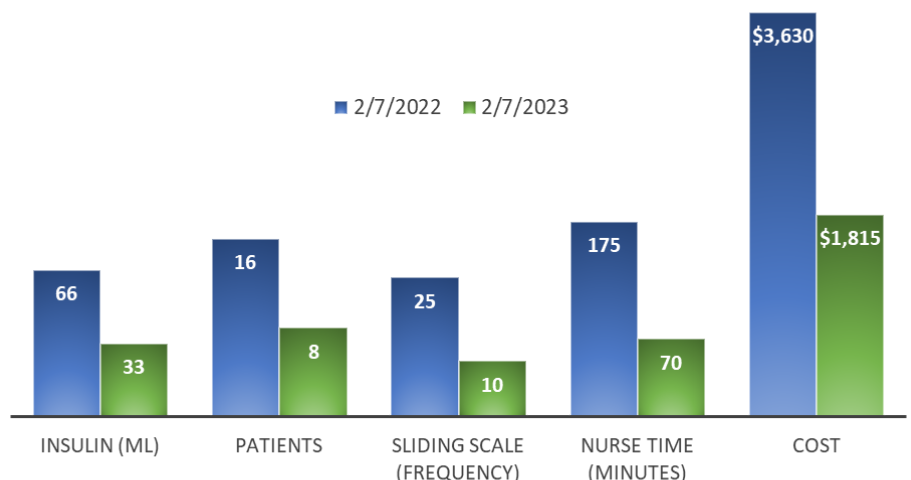
*Written by Deanna Merrick, PharmD, BCGP, Consultant Pharmacist*

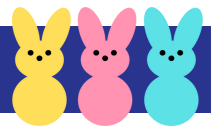
**INTRODUCTION:** Sliding scale insulin has been around since the 1930s. However, despite its current use in healthcare facilities it has become controversial in recent years due to adverse effects of hypoglycemia and the fact that is not an effective way of controlling blood sugar.

An article in the peer reviewed journal "American Family Physician", looked back at nearly 40 years' worth of studies on sliding-scale insulin and not one study showed it was effective at lowering blood sugar. This method can cause blood sugar to drop too low often giving that rollercoaster effect of blood sugar readings.

**KEEP IN MIND:** Sliding scale is also a costly practice for our facilities. When you calculate the cost of a generic pen (~\$55), glucose monitoring, safety needles, and nursing time spent on this the cost rises quickly. An average sliding scale administration can take around 5-7 minutes to do from start to finish. One singular patient getting sliding scale insulin will cost 28 minutes per day in nursing time alone. Sliding scale can open up facilities to infection control citations regarding the use of glucose monitors.

**SLIDING SCALE INITIATIVE:** Absolute Consultant Pharmacists have started an initiative to reduce the amount of sliding scale use in our facilities. Below is data from a SNF facility averaging 120 beds. The graph's data is based on the cost of a 3ml insulin pen (\$55) and the time it takes to administer a sliding scale (7 minutes).





**JUST SAY NO!** The following societies recommend against the use of sliding scale insulin in the elderly population:

1. American Geriatrics Society and Beers Criteria – Sliding scale insulin has a higher risk of hypoglycemia without improvement in hyperglycemia management.
2. The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine – Do not use sliding scale insulin for long-term diabetes management for individuals residing in the nursing home.
3. American Diabetes Association –Simplification of complex treatment plans (especially insulin) is recommended to reduce the risk of hypoglycemia and polypharmacy.
4. Endocrine Society - Using sliding scale insulin in hospitalized or LTCF patients may lead to hypoglycemia and wide oscillations in blood glucose levels.

**For more information, contact your Consultant Pharmacist.**

## About the Author



When Deanna isn't deprescribing or drilling down on sliding scales, she enjoys traveling, spending time with her dog, Sloopy and husband, Kyle while sipping tequila and supporting Inter Milan.

**Deanna Merrick, PharmD, BCGP, is a clinical consultant pharmacist. She started her Absolute career in operations in the spring of 2016. Her clinical knowledge quickly made her the best qualified candidate to be added to the consulting team in January 2019. She is passionate about appropriate diabetes management and medication optimization. She is currently working towards advanced credentialing in diabetes management which will impact Absolute pharmacy's consulting of the diabetics we serve. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University and a diehard Buckeye fan.**



How can you tell which rabbits are getting old?

**Look for the gray hares.**



How do you know a rabbit is in a good mood?

**He's hoppy.**