

"BOLUSING FOR ARROWS" WITH THE DEXCOM G5®

The [Endocrine Society](#) has published [guidelines](#)* on using the Dexcom G5® trend arrows to refine the amount of insulin to be taken with meals or a correction, to account for rising or falling blood glucose. Frequent use of trend arrow adjustments may suggest an overall review of insulin doses or pump settings.

How to use these guidelines:

1. These guidelines are for **advanced** users who are experienced with *CGM*.
2. If you are going to eat carbs and/or your blood glucose is high, use your bolus calculator or other method to determine the amount of insulin you need to cover your carbs and the correction.
3. Find the **row** in the chart that matches your current trend arrows.
4. Find the **column** in the chart that matches your ISF (insulin sensitivity/correction factor)
5. Find the box where the selected row and column meet.
6. Add or subtract the amount of insulin (in units) shown in that box from your calculated bolus.

ARROW DIRECTION	ISF (Sensitivity/Correction Factor)				
	0-1.3	1.4-2.7	2.8-4.1	4.2-6.8	6.9-more
↑↑	add 4 U	add 3 U	add 2 U	add 1 U	add $\frac{1}{2}$ U
↑	add 3 U	add 2 U	add 1 U	add $\frac{1}{2}$ U	—
↗	add 2 U	add 1 U	add $\frac{1}{2}$ U	—	—
→	—	—	—	—	—
↘	subtract 2 U	subtract 1 U	subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ U	—	—
↓	subtract 3 U	subtract 2 U	subtract 1 U	subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ U	—
↓↓	subtract 4 U	subtract 3 U	subtract 2 U	subtract 1 U	subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ U

When to use these guidelines:

1. Either before a meal, or 3 or more hours after bolusing for a meal or snack
2. When there is no strenuous activity planned
3. When the sensor appears to be working correctly
4. The insulin-on-board (insulin action, active insulin) time is set at 3 hours or more

When NOT to use these guidelines:

1. Less than 3 hours after eating a meal
2. After forgetting a meal bolus (do the meal boluses instead)
3. When strenuous physical activity is planned
4. When there is illness: use our sick-day management guidelines instead
5. At bedtime or overnight, unless you are planning on rechecking the BG after 1 and 2 hours

See also our [Correcting for Arrows](#) worksheet.

*Laffel M, et al. A Practical Approach to Using Trend Arrows on the Dexcom G5 CGM System to Manage Children and Adolescents with Diabetes. *Journal of the Endocrine Society* 2017;1(12):1461-1476.