

# Inhalant Could Spell End Of Injections for Diabetics

**A new powder insulin would be administered through inhalers and would be easier for diabetics.**

**By WORTH CIVILS**  
Staff Writer

Diabetics might soon be able to trade in their needles for inhalers if a new form of insulin is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Diabetes is a chronic pancreatic disease characterized by an insulin deficiency, and its sufferers are injected with insulin hormones to regulate their insulin levels.

The new form of insulin is a powder that diabetics can absorb through their lungs by using an inhaler. Doctors and patients said the inhaler would be more convenient and less painful for diabetics.

Pfizer is sponsoring clinical trials for the insulin powder at 50 sites across the nation, including East Carolina University.

Dr. Robert Tanenberg, an endocrinologist at ECU's Brody School of Medicine, said researchers had been developing the powdered insulin for several years, and the drug should have FDA approval by 2001. "The drug is very impressive, and we're very pleased with the results," he said. "I don't see any problems (with FDA approval)."

He said the inhalant form of insulin would allow diabetics to take medication more easily than with injections. "We've had more cooperation, and (patients) have overall better control."

Lisa Thompson, a diabetic freshman at UNC-Chapel Hill, said she had been taking at least four insulin shots every day since she was 8 years old. Thompson said she would prefer the insulin inhaler. "I would definitely support anything that would require less injections," she said. "I've learned to live with (the injections) but since I've come to college, handling my diabetes day to day is more difficult."

Having to transport the injection equipment was one reason Thompson said she would prefer the inhalant. "It would be easier to carry around than insulin and needles and everything."

Tanenberg said the fear of needles was common and could prevent some diabetics from receiving enough insulin.

"My hope is (the inhalant) will encourage people to come (to the doctor)," he said.

While the inhalant might eliminate the need for injections, it could cause problems for smokers.

Tanenberg said the inhalant form of insulin, which had no other side effects, would not work for diabetic smokers because their lungs would not be able to absorb the powder.

But smokers might be able to continue their habit if pharmaceutical companies developed a powder that a smoker's lungs could absorb, Tanenberg said. One such company will sponsor another clinical trial for an inhalant form of insulin at UNC Hospitals later this year.

Joseph Largay, an instructor at UNC's Diabetes Care Center, said the pharmaceutical company Lilly would sponsor the testing in the late summer or early fall.

*The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.*

# Iran Delays OPEC Oil Price Decision

Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Iran is the only OPEC member holding out against an agreement to increase petroleum output by up to 7 percent, the Saudi oil minister said Tuesday as delegates met to try to forge a consensus that could lead to price relief at the gas pumps.

OPEC ministers failed to reach agreement Monday on how much crude oil to add to global supplies. The 11 ministers were to resume formal discussions today.

"The biggest difference is between the position of Iran and the rest. Their position is consistent — that they don't want any change," Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali Naimi told reporters.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have backed a production increase of 1.5 million to 1.7 million barrels a day. The upper limit of their proposed increase would amount to about 7 percent more than what OPEC members agreed to

pump after sharply curtailing output last March.

Iran has proposed boosting daily production by no more than 1.2 million barrels of crude.

The United States has gone to exceptional lengths to lobby the cartel to raise production.

Alarmed at the tripling of oil prices during the past 12 months, the U.S. government has said that an increase of 2 million to 2.5 million barrels per day is needed to replenish depleted inventories and satisfy growing world demand. U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson pressed home the point recently, visiting eight OPEC countries.

"This is the first time that the United States has been really involved" in OPEC decision-making, said Bill Edwards of Houston-based Edwards Energy Consultants. "This time it's the big power play."

For global consumers of refined products such as gasoline, much depends on

efforts by moderates led by Saudi Arabia, OPEC's No. 1 producer, to win Iran over to their point of view.

Naimi suggested that Iran is only willing to back an agreement that would legitimize the estimated 1.2 million "unofficial" barrels that OPEC members are currently pumping each day in excess of their quotas.

An OPEC source speaking on condition of anonymity said Tuesday that the group might agree to boost production starting next month despite Iran's objections. The source said there are precedents for such an action by a majority of OPEC members. However, it wasn't immediately clear how an agreement to boost output would work without Iran's consent.

OPEC must decide whether to extend cuts it made in 1998 and 1999 that have propelled oil prices to their highest levels since the 1991 Gulf War. The latest round of cuts expires at the end of the week.

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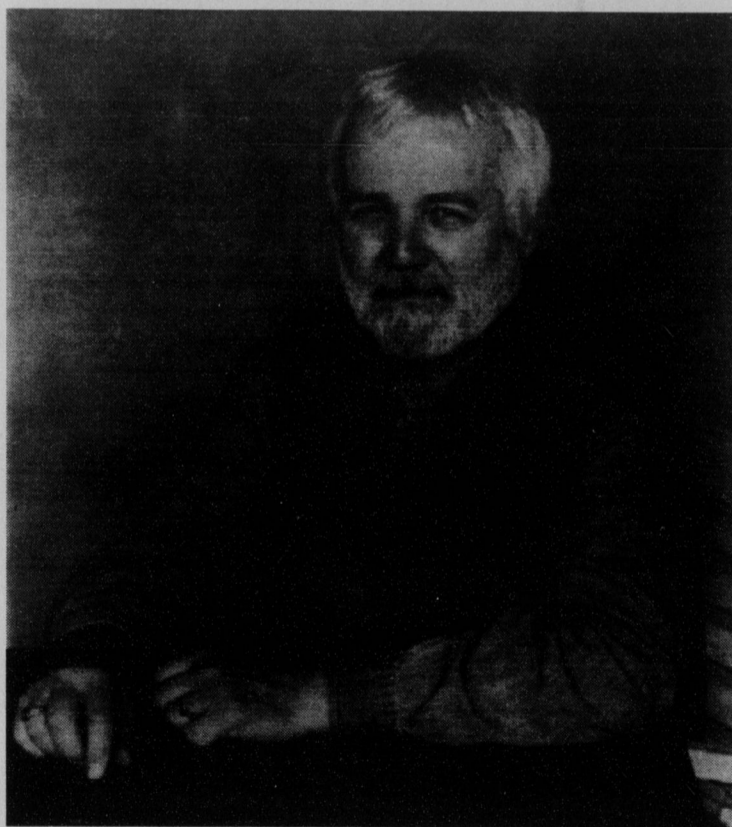
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Sunday, April 2

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Monday, April 3

Discussion of fiction with Russell Banks and UNC-CH faculty panel  
Dey Hall, Toy Lounge, 3:30 p.m. and

Screenings of *The Sweet Hereafter* at 7 p.m. and *Affliction* at 9:30 p.m., Carolina Union Theatre.

Thursday, April 6

Discussion of screenwriting and adapting novels to film with Russell Banks and UNC-CH faculty panel at 2 p.m., Kresge Commons Room (downstairs), James M. Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence, Graham Memorial

Morgan Writer-in-Residence sponsored by the Department of English and made possible by a gift from UNC-CH alumni Allen and Musette Morgan of Memphis.

For more information, call 919-962-4283, or [www.unc.edu/depts/english/news.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/english/news.html).

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