

# Postnatal Care for Women with Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes

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**Maternity**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

## **Introduction**

Congratulations! Now you have had your baby, your insulin requirements will be reduced. This is why your medications will have been lowered or stopped.

- It is important that you continue to monitor your blood glucose levels as you adjust to life as a mother. Having a newborn baby will mean a change to your routine and will include night-time feeds so you may need more frequent snacks and monitoring of your glucose levels.
- Your control can be more relaxed (5.0- 7.0mmol/l pre-meals).
- You will be given support to adjust your insulin doses over the first few weeks as you may need less, especially if you choose to breastfeed your baby.

## **Can I breastfeed?**

Yes. You can safely breastfeed with diabetes and it may reduce your baby's risk of obesity and of developing diabetes themselves in later life. Insulin does not pass into the breast milk.

## **Breastfeeding for type 2 diabetics taking tablets**

You can take metformin safely while breastfeeding; however, other diabetes tablets should be avoided. Sometimes mothers who have started insulin in pregnancy may choose to continue with this postnatally if they feel it has helped to manage their diabetes. When making changes to your medications, check their suitability for breastfeeding mothers.

## **Breastfeeding with type 1 diabetes**

Here are some points that can help to keep you and your baby safe while breastfeeding:

- Your insulin dose will be reduced immediately after birth and regular blood glucose monitoring will help to establish the correct insulin doses.
- Plan to have a snack before or during a feed.

- You could need up to 40-50g extra carbohydrate daily while breastfeeding.
- Keep something to treat low blood glucose nearby when you nurse, so you don't have to stop your child's feeding.
- Eat regular meals containing carbohydrate.
- Always take a carbohydrate snack with you when you are out with your baby.
- You may need a supper or night-time snack to cover your baby's night-time feeds.
- Continue to monitor your blood glucose levels regularly and seek advice from your diabetes team regarding insulin doses.
- Aim for blood glucose levels slightly higher than during pregnancy to reduce the risk of hypoglycaemia (5.0-7.0mmols/l pre-meals).

## **Contraception**

It is important that you use effective contraception until you are planning another pregnancy. Contraception can be used to have a healthy start to a pregnancy.

All contraception methods are suitable for women with diabetes and you can discuss the different options with your GP or practice nurse, enabling you to choose an effective method that suits you.

## **Preconception care**

As a woman with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, it is extremely important that you plan any future pregnancies. Good blood glucose control before and throughout pregnancy reduces the chance of problems for both you and your baby.

- You should have an HbA1c test performed prior to becoming pregnant. Ideally this result will be less than 48mmol/mol. Pregnancy is not recommended if this result is above 86mmol/mol.
- You will require a higher dose of folic acid (5mg) one month prior to trying to get pregnant. This can be prescribed by your GP.
- We are happy to support you getting into the best of health prior to

- pregnancy and recommend you discuss any plans to become pregnant again with your Diabetes team (GP / Nurse / Consultant / Midwife) at the earliest opportunity. You can self-refer to the Diabetes Specialist Midwife by calling 07773595454.

## In summary

- It is important to regularly check your blood glucose levels, as your insulin requirements may change.
- Remember to have treatment for low blood glucose levels readily available throughout the day and night.
- Remember that breastfeeding can reduce your need for insulin, and so have a snack and a drink before or during feeding.
- Discuss effective contraception with your GP/Practice Nurse to promote healthy subsequent pregnancies.
- Attend follow-up consultant appointments to review your diabetes.
- Plan your next pregnancy carefully so the blood glucose levels can be optimised.
- Notify your Community Midwifery team or contact your Diabetes Specialist Midwife early in your next pregnancy.

## Further information is available at:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

(search for 'Diabetes in Pregnancy')

## Leaflet Details

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## **Other formats**

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : 01539 795497.

## **Travelling to our hospitals**

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website:  
<http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 795497.

## **Useful Contact Details**

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111

## **Your Information**

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 795497.

## **Evidence**

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

## **Feedback**

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 795497.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

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