

**Patient
Information**

Breastfeeding with diabetes

Introduction

This leaflet will give you information that will help you to control your diabetes while breastfeeding.

Do I still need to keep tight control of my blood glucose levels?

While you were pregnant it was important to keep your blood glucose levels tightly controlled to keep your unborn baby healthy. Now you have a baby to look after it is important for you to avoid hypoglycaemia (hypo's). At first, it is safer for your blood glucose levels to run slightly higher while your body is adjusting to breastfeeding and the demand of a newborn baby.

Breastfeeding and insulin doses

Breast milk contains lactose, a type of carbohydrate. When you breast feed your body loses some of this carbohydrate which can cause your blood glucose levels to drop.

Because of this you may find that you need up to 30% less insulin.

You will have a discussion with the diabetes team about returning to your pre-natal insulin doses. However, we advise that you monitor your blood glucose levels regularly to make sure that you are giving the correct dose.

Do I need a carbohydrate snack every time I breastfeed my baby?

Babies vary in the amount of breast milk they take and the length of time they feed each day. To help prevent hypos, you may need to have a snack containing carbohydrates during feeds such as fruit, milk, yogurt, toast, sandwich, cereal bar, biscuits or your meal before or during each feed.

The amount of carbohydrate you require will vary so you will need to experiment with the amount you eat and the doses of insulin you take.

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Department

Diabetes Team

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Patient Information

You may need a snack before you go to bed plus during the night to help keep your blood glucose levels stable. Keep snacks by your bed, so they are within easy reach.

Regular blood glucose monitoring will help you to work out how much you need to snack.

What if my blood glucose levels are high with all the snacking?

If your blood glucose levels are high you could reduce the size of the snacks, or if you are hungry and want to continue with the snacks you may need to increase your insulin.

What if I have hypos?

You will need to reduce your insulin if you are having hypos and make sure that you are eating regularly.

What happens when I stop or reduce breastfeeding?

If for any reason you suddenly stop breastfeeding you may need to increase your insulin to control your blood glucose levels. Snacking may also not be required.

If you reduce breastfeeding over a longer period of time, you will need to gradually increase insulin as required.

What do I do if I need support when I get home?

If you have any queries about your blood glucose levels/insulin doses please contact the Diabetes Team. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The Diabetes Hospital Team

Tel: 0300 422 4266

Email address: ghn-tr.diabetesnurses@nhs.net

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Please leave a message with your name and contact details. Your call/email will be returned within 24 to 48 hours (Monday to Friday, except bank holidays).

The Diabetes Dietician

Tel: 0300 422 3460

Email address: ghn-tr.diet.diabetes@nhs.net

Please leave a message with your name and contact details. Your call/email will be returned within 24 to 48 hours (Monday to Friday, except bank holidays).

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