

Self-management of your child's diabetes in hospital

Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your child has been admitted to hospital for a procedure or treatment and has diabetes. During their stay in hospital, your child will receive treatment for their diabetes. This can be given to them by us, or you can choose to give it yourself, as you would do at home (this is known as self-management of diabetes).

This factsheet explains what self-management of diabetes in hospital involves. We hope it will help you to make an informed decision as to whether you would like to be responsible for managing your child's diabetes during their stay in hospital. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your child's healthcare team.

What is self-management of diabetes?

We understand that parents and guardians of children with diabetes tend to be very knowledgeable about their child's condition, and often know more than anyone else about how much insulin they need in different situations. Therefore, we would like to give you the option of self-managing your child's diabetes during their stay in hospital.

If you choose to self-manage your child's diabetes during their stay in hospital, there are two options available to you:

Level one self-management

At this level, you will be responsible for:

- attaching the needle to the insulin device and dialling the dose given to you by the nurse or diabetes specialist
- giving or supervising your child's insulin injections

Level two self-management

At this level, you will be responsible for:

- monitoring your child's blood glucose levels on a regular basis
- deciding what insulin dose your child needs based on their blood glucose levels
- giving or supervising your child's insulin injections
- recording your child's blood glucose levels and diabetes treatment on our ward paperwork
- using, storing and disposing of used diabetes equipment safely

What are the benefits of self-managing my child's diabetes in hospital?

If you choose to self-manage your child's diabetes in hospital, you:

- won't have to wait for a nurse to be available to give your child their insulin
- will have more control over when to give your child their insulin before mealtimes, and can follow the same familiar routines that you have at home

What are the risks of self-managing my child's diabetes in hospital?

You will need to make sure you always inform your child's nurses of any changes you make without their supervision. This includes:

- recording insulin doses given
- recording glucose readings
- any hypo treatments given

This ensures that the healthcare team caring for your child can safely support you while you are self-managing your child's diabetes.

Will I always be allowed to self-manage my child's diabetes during their stay in hospital?

It may not always be safe for you to manage your child's diabetes during their stay in hospital. For example, if your child is very unwell or if we have prescribed them additional medication, such as steroids.

In order to allow you to self-manage your child's diabetes during their stay in hospital, we will assess both yours and your child's general wellbeing and their current treatment plan to check whether it is safe for you to do so. We will also ask you some questions to check that you understand what doses of insulin your child needs in certain situations and how to give your child their insulin injections.

If we feel that it is safe for you to self-manage your child's diabetes at 'level two', we will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you are happy to do so. If you have any questions, please ask us before you sign the consent form.

If we do not feel it is safe for you to self-manage your child's diabetes, we will explain the reasons why.

We will reassess the safety of the situation daily. We will also reassess the safety of the situation if your child's condition changes, for example, if they need to have an operation.

Do I have to self-manage my child's diabetes?

If you would prefer not to, we can manage your child's diabetes and give them their insulin injections while they are in hospital.

If you change your mind and would like to start managing your child's diabetes, please let us know and we will assess whether it is safe for you to do so.

Please note, however, that if your child uses an insulin pump at home, we will ask you to self-manage your child's diabetes while they are in hospital. This is because you will have the most experience in using this particular pump. If you are unable to stay with your child for the duration of their hospital stay, we may need to arrange a different diabetes management plan. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you in advance.

Can I use my own glucose meter or continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) device to monitor my child's blood glucose levels?

You may use your own glucose meter or CGM device to monitor your child's blood glucose levels during their stay in hospital, unless it is not medically advisable. For example, a CGM device should not be used if your child has any symptoms of diabetic ketoacidosis (a serious problem that can happen in people with diabetes if they do not have enough insulin in their body).

If your child's symptoms do not match the glucose readings from your own meter or device, please let us know and we will perform a finger prick test using our own calibrated blood glucose meter.

It is important that you let us know if your child's blood glucose level is lower than 4mmol/L or higher than 14mmol/L.

It is also very important that you always have your child's usual hypo treatment to hand, so you can treat a hypo immediately. Please let us know what your child's usual hypo treatment is, so we can treat them in your absence.

Insulin safety

For your child's safety and the safety of others, you must:

- store your child's insulin out of sight in their own drug locker or in a special plastic box (we will provide this if needed)
- dispose of any used needles immediately after use in the yellow sharps container provided (**do not leave needles attached to the insulin pens**)
- record the doses of insulin that you give your child on the insulin chart provided (along with their blood glucose readings)
- make sure that you have enough insulin and needles and tell us if you are running low

When your child returns home, you must store any spare insulin cartridges in your fridge. The insulin cartridge or vial you are currently using can be kept out of the fridge for up to one month.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the ward nurse or ask to speak to a member of the children's diabetes team. Alternatively, you can call them directly on the number below.

Children's diabetes team
Telephone: **023 8120 6893**

Useful links

www.digibete.org

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport

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Version 1. Published March 2023. Due for review March 2026. 3348