

Children's Services: Information and Education

Information for Children with Diabetes and their Families

Diagnosis

We appreciate the diagnosis of diabetes is a distressing time for you and your child and much of what you are told today may not be remembered. This information will be given to you again at home. We suggest you jot down any questions as you think of them and these can be answered at the home visits, through a telephone call or at clinic. Information will be given to you by a variety of sources at home and in hospital. At the beginning you will find that there is a lot to learn. Try not to panic, there is plenty of time and there are lots of people to help.

Home Visits

The majority of children will be well enough to start their treatment, including insulin injections, at home with close supervision from the diabetes nurse. Usually this is on the same day. This is a time when there is an opportunity to go over issues that were discussed at diagnosis. It is a good idea to write down any questions you would like answered. To begin with home visits to help with the insulin injections will continue until you are confident about this. Thereafter, the Diabetes Team will continue to give support and take you through the on-going education programme. The Paediatric dietitian will also come to your home to give initial advice on diabetes and food.

Telephone Support

You will be issued with telephone contact numbers. If you have any worries or concerns do not hesitate to contact one of the team. Out of hours you can contact the Diabnet helpline on 08452700070. Alternatively you can phone the paediatric wards who can answer your questions or put you in touch with one of the team. Contact can also be made during illness, poor control and for general advice – please don't wait until the next clinic visit.. If your child has an infection it may be appropriate to also contact your GP for treatment.

Food

Having diabetes does not mean that your child must follow a strict diet or avoid all the foods that they enjoy. Following a few sensible guidelines about what your child eats and drinks will mean that their diabetes will be more straightforward to manage, and allow your child to lead a full and active life.

The Paediatric dietitian will arrange to visit you to explain about food and insulin. She will also be available when you come to clinic and can be contacted by telephone or email.

Clinic Contact

Clinic attendance is frequent initially but is aimed at becoming 3 to 4 monthly. The clinic is staffed by Doctors, Diabetes Nurses, Dietitian and Psychologist . The children have their height and weight measured at each visit. At each visit there will be a fingertip blood test called HbA1c. This test tells you the average blood glucose level over approximately ten weeks before clinic visit. Your child's blood sugar meter will also be downloaded at clinic.

Prescriptions

You will be issued with enough insulin and equipment to last for a few days. Your nurse will give you a list of items you will need on a regular basis from your GP. Other equipment which is not available on prescription will be issued by the diabetes nurse. This will be listed on the bottom of your prescription list.

School

Your Paediatric Diabetes Nurse will make visits to the Nursery/School at the time of diagnosis, when changing school or to enable your child to attend school trips. An appointment will be made by the Diabetes Nurse Specialist to meet the appropriate teacher and school staff. The school will

be given guidelines which you may read, including contact information, treatment of hypo's, information on exercise, school trips etc.

Parent/child contact

Often it is a good idea to have a chat with other parents who have a child with diabetes or your child may want to meet another child the same age. Ask the diabetes nurse who will put you in touch with a family nearby.

GP/Health Visitor/School Nurse

All will be informed of your child's diagnosis. The GP will be kept informed of your child's progress. It is however a good idea to make an appointment to see your GP in the first few weeks to ensure he/she know what you need on prescription. Your GP, who probably referred you to the hospital, will also be interested to know how you and your child are coping.

Dentist

Your child should continue to visit their own dentist as usual but you should inform him/her that your child does have diabetes..

Optician

Your child will have an annual eye check after they become twelve which will look for any changes due to diabetes. It is also advised that you take your child for regular eye checks at an optician.

Psychologist

The Diabetes team includes a Clinical Psychologist. Children and their families can be referred for many different reasons connected to living with diabetes.

The Starter Pack

You will be issued with a starter pack of equipment and an initial education folder which you can add to as time goes on.

The Future

There has been a great deal of progress in the care of people with diabetes over the last 20 years and there will be further developments in the next decade. There is evidence that well controlled diabetes helps to ensure good health in the future and reduce diabetes related problems with eyes, kidneys, circulation and feet.