

Patient information

Diabetes - what to consider if having surgery (for adults)

- ⇒ How would having surgery affect my diabetes?
- ⇒ What shall I bring to my hospital appointments and admission to hospital?
- ⇒ What do the hospital need to know about my diabetes?
- ⇒ Why do I need good control of my bloods sugar for surgery?
- ⇒ What should I expect at my pre-assessment?
- ⇒ How do I prepare for surgery?
- ⇒ What can I do to promote good control of my diabetes in hospital?
- ⇒ What to know before I leave hospital



How would having surgery affect your diabetes?

- ⇒ If you are unable to eat or drink you **may** be at risk of having low blood sugar, a 'hypo', when you take insulin or tablets such as Gliclazide, Glipizide, Glimepiride.

- ⇒ If you are having a surgical procedure, your blood glucose may rise in response to this, even if you are not eating as much.
- ⇒ Following an anaesthetic your appetite may be affected or you may feel sick or nauseous.
- ⇒ Depending on the surgical procedure you may not be able to continue the same activities until fully recovered.
- ⇒ If your surgical procedure affects your hands or arms this may prevent you from managing your diabetes medication until you have recovered.
- ⇒ If you stay in hospital the diet offered will be different to what you choose at home and this may affect your blood sugars.
- ⇒ Sometimes you may be asked to change your diet or medication to prepare for your procedure and this may affect your blood sugars.

What shall I bring to my hospital appointments and admission to hospital?

- ⇒ A current list of all your medications from your GP practice (please check it is current).
- ⇒ Your blood glucose monitoring meter (if you have one) or equipment.
- ⇒ If you are on insulin or medications that could give you a 'hypo' please bring your hypo treatment and a snack in case you need it.

What will the hospital need to know about your diabetes?

- ⇒ Do you have Type 1, Type 2 or Type 3 diabetes?
- ⇒ When were you diagnosed?
- ⇒ Who helps you look after your diabetes, your GP or the hospital?
- ⇒ What medication you take, when you take it and the doses you are on.
- ⇒ Do you test your blood sugars? (the blood glucose meter should be less than 3 years old)
- ⇒ Does anybody help you with your medication? eg does a community nurse visit to give your insulin.
- ⇒ Do you know when you are having a hypo? ie hypo awareness.
- ⇒ Do you have any specific equipment to manage your diabetes? eg insulin pump, Libre meter, glucose mentoring meter.

Why do I need good control of my blood sugars for surgery?

There is evidence to say that erratic diabetes control or high blood sugars before surgery can lead to numerous problems. This includes infections, at the wound and generalised. It can also affect your heart, lungs and kidneys. These high / low blood sugars could extend your length of stay in hospital.

What should I expect at my pre-assessment if I am having a general anaesthetic?

- ⇒ The nurse will ask you some questions about your diabetes.
- ⇒ You will be advised on your diabetes medication as you will be starved for a period of time and the medications may need adjusting.
- ⇒ You may need an insulin infusion if you will miss more than one meal. If you need this your blood sugars will be tested 1 - 2 hourly whilst in hospital.
- ⇒ If you have other medical problems it may be necessary to adjust these medications before surgery too, eg warfarin.
- ⇒ Always let the pre-admission unit know if there are any changes to your health or medication after your pre-assessment by phoning 01284 712810 before your procedure.

Preparing for surgery

- ⇒ Please make sure your diabetes control is as good as it can be for you.
- ⇒ For planned surgery (elective) your diabetes blood test 'HbA1c' needs to be less than 8.5% or 69mmol/mol. This is a national guideline that surgeons follow.
- ⇒ Please make sure you keep as fit as possible and if you know you have other health problems, that these are also as well controlled as possible, e.g. blood pressure. You may want to get them reviewed before you have your hospital appointment to avoid any delays.
- ⇒ Make yourself aware of your sick day rules-'what to do if you are unwell' and ask your diabetes provider for further advice if you are unsure what to do if you are unwell.

What can I do to promote good control of my diabetes in hospital?

- ⇒ Have good control of my diabetes before I attend hospital.

- ⇒ Bring all my diabetes equipment, medications and hypo treatments with me and spare insulin pump consumables / CGMS (if you use them).
- ⇒ Eat food from the healthy heart options from the food menu with the aim to mirror your eating at home.
- ⇒ If you can, try to look after your own diabetes in hospital. However please be aware the doctors and nurses would need to oversee your diabetes, you may need to be patient as nurses will need to supervise and double check how you manage your diabetes.
- ⇒ If you take insulin or tablets called Gliclazide, Glipizide or Glimepiride you may be at risk of a low blood sugar which suggests to aim for blood sugars between 6 -12 mmol/L for a surgical admission unless there is a specific reason not to, to avoid low or high blood sugars. Otherwise the target would be 4 -12 mmol/L.
- ⇒ The ward staff may need to take your blood sugars in hospital which is aimed at keeping you safe in hospital, even if you don't need to usually do this at home.
- ⇒ The ward staff may need to ask a diabetes specialist nurse to review your diabetes if necessary.
- ⇒ Let the ward staff know if you have any problems with your feet as they should be checked daily. You may need to have a foot assessment by a podiatrist.
- ⇒ Inform the ward staff if there are any specific dietary needs to ensure you are suitably nourished to recover from your surgery and maintain good blood glucose control.

What to know before I leave hospital

- ⇒ Please make sure you know of any agreed diabetes medication changes and have them documented to continue at home
- ⇒ Follow your sick day rules.
- ⇒ For a few days after your procedure, expect your blood sugars to vary. Please test your blood sugars more regularly if you are able to. Seek advice from your diabetes provider if you are concerned.

For further information, please contact the Pre-admission Unit by telephone: 01284 712810 however post discharge, back to your usual diabetes provider.