

What to expect after your baby is born; information for women with diabetes (1 of 2)



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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During your pregnancy the treatment for your diabetes will have changed.

After the birth of your baby, your diabetes treatment will need adjusting.

If you were usually on insulin, you will quickly return to the dose you needed before you were pregnant. The team will discuss this with you.

If you were previously on tablets, we may recommend some changes, especially if you are planning to breast feed.

After baby has been born we recommend monitoring your blood sugars before meals and at bedtime initially and staying in close contact with the diabetes nurses (01722 425176).

Whilst you are in hospital you can contact the team yourself or you can ask the midwives to do this for you.

What you can do to help your baby?

Breastfeeding

Where possible we would always encourage you to breastfeed. Feeding your baby offers a huge range of health benefits for both you and for your baby.

After your baby's birth, he or she will be carefully monitored, paying particular attention to their blood sugar levels.

When your baby is between 2 and 4 hours of age we take the first blood sugar level from the baby's heel. In newborns, a blood sugar of 2 or above is perfectly normal. Any lower readings can be treated with oral dextrose and then also some breast milk.

Very occasionally babies need to be admitted to our Neonatal Unit. If this does happen, we will keep you informed and try to bring your baby back to you as soon as we can, or transfer your care to the Neonatal Unit too.

Colostrum harvesting

You can collect your colostrum during pregnancy. Colostrum is the very first milk and is produced throughout your pregnancy.

We would encourage you to use a technique called 'hand expressing' to collect your colostrum and freeze until you need to use it. You can do this

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01722 425183

from 36-37 weeks of pregnancy.

We know that an early breastfeed (within 30 minutes) will help stabilise your baby's blood sugar. Sometimes breastfeeding doesn't happen straight away, and it is then that your frozen colostrum can be so very useful.

Even a small amount can make a huge difference.

Your diabetic nurse or clinic staff will be able to give you an 'expressing pack' with further information and equipment.

Skin to skin contact

Once born, your baby should be placed naked against the skin of your breast and tummy. This approach works well; it keeps your baby warm and calm and begins the process of finding the breast and learning how to feed.

This can take a little time, try to be patient! Interruptions during the first hour or so is not advised unless absolutely necessary. It tends to make the baby sleep and then not to feed. Weighing and measuring can wait.

Skin to skin can last for as long as you want it to, or at least until after the first feed. It will always help to establish breastfeeding in the days to come.

If you choose to use formula to feed your baby

We still recommend skin to skin at birth for the warming and calming of your baby, the first feed can be given in skin to skin contact if you like.

We have small ready-made bottles of formula that you can use whilst in hospital and will show you how to bottle feed, make formula and sterilise equipment.

Your blood sugars

Remember each time you breastfeed or express your milk you are using up calories. Whilst you are breastfeeding you may find that your blood sugars are lower than normal and the number of low blood sugar readings may increase. It is important to watch for this. Explain to family and friends and manage hypoglycaemia as you did in pregnancy. Your treatment will need adjusting if this happens – please discuss this with the diabetes nurses if you are not sure what to do.

It is important to try to maintain the healthy eating pattern you established during your pregnancy. The early days of parenting can be tiring so you will need plenty of nutritious foods.

Future clinic visits

We would like to see you again in clinic 6 weeks after your baby's birth when we can review you and answer any questions you may have. We will also plan with you how to help in the future with your diabetes.

If you have any queries please get in touch with the team - telephone number below.

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