



Information for
patients and
carers

Use of Anticlotting medications in
your pregnancy

Low Molecular Weight Heparin (LMWH)

Introduction

You have been advised to have anticlotting / blood thinning injections during your pregnancy. This medication is also known as Low Molecular Weight Heparin (LMWH), such as dalteparin (Fragmin®) or enoxaparin (Clexane®).

These injections are used to treat or reduce the chance of blood clots (thrombosis) in your blood vessels.

Your injections

Your injection will be supplied in a “pre-filled” syringe. This will be the dose you require. You will be given instructions on how to use the equipment, there is also an illustration at the back of this leaflet to assist you.

Important considerations

LMWH injections can affect whether it is safe for you to have an epidural or a spinal anaesthetic during your labour or birth of your baby. This is because, if the timing of the epidural or spinal is too soon after a LMWH injection bleeding can occur around the spinal nerves and cause damage to the nerves.

In order that you can safely choose to have an epidural during your labour or a spinal anaesthetic so you can stay awake during a caesarean birth, it is essential that:

- At least **12 hours** have passed since your last LMWH injection
- However, if you are having LMWH injections because you have already had a thrombosis during your pregnancy, at least **24 hours** must have passed since your last LMWH injection

What to do if you think you are in labour?

- Do not have any further LMWH injections unless told to do so by a doctor or midwife
- Make a note of the time of your last injection
- Contact the Maternity Triage Unit: 01772 524495

During your labour

...if you decide you would like an epidural:

You will be assessed by an anaesthetist. It is important that you tell them you have been having LMWH injections and at what time you had your last LMWH injection.

The anaesthetist will then be able to establish whether it is safe for you to have the epidural.

...if you need an assisted or caesarean birth:

You will only be able to have a spinal anaesthetic (stay awake) if there has been enough time between your last LMWH injection and the time you need your operation.

If the time since your last LMWH injection is too short or if the operation is an emergency, you may need to have a general anaesthetic, this will be explained to you by the anaesthetist looking after you.

After the birth of your baby

LMWH injections can be safely recommenced 4 hours after your epidural has been removed or spinal inserted.

You may be advised to avoid Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory (NSAIDs) medicines such as Aspirin, Diclofenac (Voltarol®) and Ibuprofen if you continue with the LMWH injections after giving birth.

Mothers who are assessed as being at increased chance of developing blood clots (Deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolus) following the birth of their baby require regular anti-clotting injections for up to 6 weeks.

If you have any questions

During your pregnancy you can ask for an appointment with a consultant anaesthetist at the Sharoe Green Unit antenatal clinic to discuss your plans for pain relief in labour and the birth of your baby. When you arrive in hospital to have your baby, you can ask to see an anaesthetist to discuss any further queries or concerns that you may have.

Please always read the information leaflet that comes with your medication.

How to give your low molecular weight heparin (LMWH) injections

This is a simple process that you can do at home. It is given by a small injection under the skin (subcutaneously). Currently at Lancashire teaching hospitals we provide you with Fragmin. You should inject (or give) the dose of LMWH at the time recommended by your health professional (usually around the same time each day). You will be given pre filled syringes which are the correct dose for you, along with a sharps bin for you to dispose of your needles correctly and safely once used.

Step 1

Gather your ready to use syringe and sharps bin. Ensure you wash and dry your hands. Please note if someone else is giving you the injection they must wash and dry their hands first. Get yourself into a comfortable position.



Step 2

Choose an injection site – either the wall of the abdomen (tummy) or the front side of your thigh. The injection site should be visibly clean, washed with soap and water and dried before administration. Please note it is important to change the injection site each time, alternating between left and right.



Step 3

Remove the ready to use syringe from the sterile packaging, peeling away the protective strip. Pull back the orange needle trap from the needle cap.



Step 4

Pull off protective rubber cap lengthways to expose the needle. You will notice an air bubble in the syringe – this must not be removed. It allows the syringe to be emptied completely giving you the correct dose.



Step 5

Hold the syringe in one hand and with the other gently pinch a fold of skin with its fatty tissue between your thumb and finger. Hold the syringe at a right angle (vertically) above the folded skin, insert the needle into the skin until the needle is fully inserted, then press the plunger slowly until the syringe is emptied. Withdraw the needle slowly, a plaster is not required.



Step 6

To activate needle protection, push the needle against a hard surface and press the needle into the needle strap and dispose of the syringe in a sharps bin (provided by your health professional).



If you have any questions, please ask your midwife. On occasions you may be prescribed an alternative brand but the administration is the same. Please read the information leaflet contained within your medication box.



Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Maternity triage on 01772 524495

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/treatment-of-venous-thrombosis-in-pregnancy-and-after-birth>

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ حروف كبير ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مساعده في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما ت

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