

Driving and Diabetes

Having diabetes **may** not mean that you need to give up driving, but it does mean that you will need to plan in advance before you get behind the wheel.

- **It is a legal requirement if your diabetes is treated with insulin that you inform the DVLA.**
- **From October 1st 2011 if you currently hold a Group 2 LGV or PCV licence you will need to have an assessment to see if you can continue to hold your licence.**
- **If you hold an HGV licence you will need to surrender this.**
- **If you are using insulin on a temporary basis ie: pregnancy currently the law does not require that you routinely inform the DVLA unless you remain on insulin longer than 3 months after starting treatment. However if you experience disabling hypoglycaemia you must stop driving and inform the DVLA immediately.**
- **If you have diabetes that is treated by tablets we would advise you to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).**
- **You must always inform your insurance company of any changes to your diabetes treatment irrespective of whether you need to inform the DVLA.**
- **If you are treated with insulin or have insulin added to your treatment you will be sent a form asking for more information and requesting consent for DVLA to contact your General Practitioner (GP) or medical specialist.**
- **If you take insulin you may be issued with a licence for one, two or three years.**

Your responsibility

As a person with diabetes who is using treatment to lower your blood glucose levels you have a responsibility to ensure that your diabetes is well controlled before you drive.

The risk of hypoglycaemia should not be under estimated - having a hypo while driving can be fatal to you and other members of the public – you will lose your licence and it is highly likely that you will face prosecution.

We would advise that you check your blood glucose levels before any journey carry your blood glucose meter while driving and always carry some form of hypo treatment - glucose tablets, or lucozade and a carbohydrate snack in the driver's side of the car.

Information for Patients

If you start to feel hypo whilst you are driving you must:

- Pull over to a safe place.
- Switch off the ignition
- Take car keys out of the ignition and if safe to do so move into the passenger seat.
- Treat your hypo with glucose tablets or glucose drink immediately, follow this with a carbohydrate snack ie: biscuits
- The advice from the DVLA is that you do not drive again for 45 minutes after your blood glucose levels have returned to above 5 mmol/l.

If you have lost or have poor warning signs of impending hypoglycaemia or have frequent hypos, you should not be driving, you should discuss this with your diabetes team and notify the DVLA immediately.

Exenatide (Byetta)

Exenatide (Byetta) there is a small but significant risk of hypoglycaemia when exenatide is used in conjunction with other tablets which lower blood glucose levels.

Therefore if you hold a PCV or LGV licence you are required to **inform the DVLA so that an individual assessment can be undertaken.**

Temporary Insulin Treatment (Pregnancy / Myocardial Infarction/ Temporary treatment with steroids)

Group 1 entitlement (car/motorcycle): You may retain your licence but you should stop driving if you experience disabling hypoglycaemia. You also need to notify the DVLA again if your insulin treatment continues for longer than 3 months.

Group 2 entitlement (LGV/PCV). You may need to have an assessment and will need to discuss with your employer & the DVLA.

Taxi Drivers

Drivers managed by tablets alone will be licensed unless they develop disabilities e.g. diabetes related eye problems affecting visual acuity or visual fields, in which case your licence may be either refused, revoked or licensed for a short period..

Under Group 2 standard, insulin treated diabetes is no longer a legal bar to driving.

REMINDERS

- If you are refused a licence then the DVLA will tell you when you can reapply & send you a notice of your right to appeal.
- If your diabetes is treated with insulin you will have to sign a declaration which states that you agree to test your blood glucose before driving and at relevant times during the day. This is a legal document
- Remember many meters have memories, so if you are involved in an accident, then your meter can be checked to see if you tested before driving.
- You need to be obtaining enough test strips from your GP to be able to prove, if necessary, that you are carrying out the required number of tests.

Information for Patients

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>
<http://www.dvla.gov.uk/motoring>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
- Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946

or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk.

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you liked and suggestions for how things could be improved at this hospital. If you would like to tell us and others about your experience please make your comments through one of the following sites:-

- NHS Choice:- www.nhs.uk
- Patient Opinion:- www.patientopinion.org.uk
- I want great care:- www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about this hospital or how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the NHS Choice or Patient Opinion sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or treatment, or anything you do not understand or wish to know more about, write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.