

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.**
- **If you currently hold an HGV or PCV licence you will need to surrender these.**
- **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 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 underestimated - 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 car with you.

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.

- People who are treated by diet or tablets are normally allowed to hold LGV or PCV licences, provided they are otherwise in good health.
- People treated with insulin are not allowed to hold these licences. If you currently hold such a licence and start using insulin, you must inform the DVLA and stop driving the vehicle 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). There is a legal bar to holding these licences while insulin treated but you may reapply when insulin treatment is discontinued.

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 a legal bar to driving.

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>

You may want to visit the Health Information Centre located at the Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Tel: 0121 424 2280, 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.

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.