

Clot prevention: information for women taking LMWH (Innohep® or Tinzaparin sodium)

This leaflet is for women who have been advised to take low molecular weight heparin (LMWH, also called Innohep® or Tinzaparin sodium) during or just after their pregnancy to help prevent a clot.

Why have I been prescribed LMWH?

Pregnancy is a time when your blood becomes more sticky. If you have other risk factors such as being overweight, if you smoke, or have a family history of blood clots, you might be at risk of developing a clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis, DVT) or in the lung (pulmonary embolus, PE).

LMWH thins the blood and reduces the risk of getting a clot. Therefore, you might be advised to take LMWH before and/or after your baby is born. You should make sure that you complete this course of LMWH even if you are discharged from the hospital.

Symptoms and signs to look out for

- Pain, swelling and tenderness of the calf and/or thigh may be signs of a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).
- Chest pain, breathlessness, coughing blood and/or collapse may be signs of Pulmonary Embolism (PE).

The risk of developing a clot starts early in the pregnancy and is highest after the baby is born.

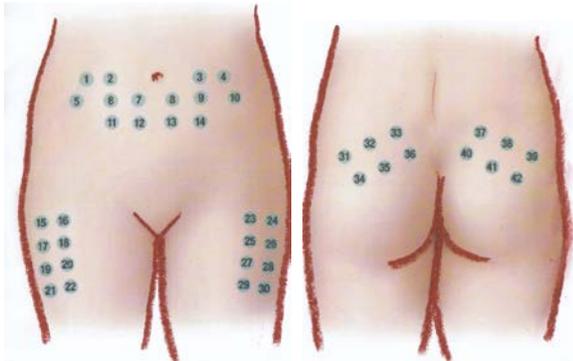
How do I self-inject LMWH?

The best areas for injection are:

- The U-shape area around the belly button. It is safe to inject LMWH in the abdomen while pregnant.
- The upper outer side of the thigh.
- The upper outer part of the buttock.
- If you have had surgery (i.e. Caesarean section), avoid areas close to the wound or bandages.

STEP 1

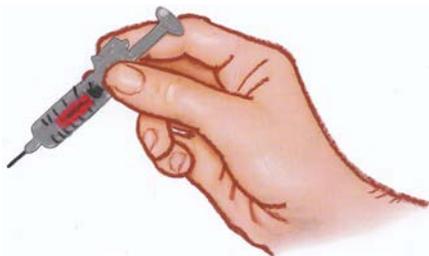
Wash your hands and clean the chosen area with an alcohol-soaked swab before you begin. Be sure to change the site of injection each day. You can use these pictures to help you select a new site each day. Check the expiry date on the syringe label. Do not use the injection after the expiry date.



STEP 2

Open the pack and remove the syringe. Be sure the medicine is clear and has nothing floating in it. If you see anything, talk to your doctor or midwife.

To ensure delivery of the full dose, do not remove the air bubble from the syringe.



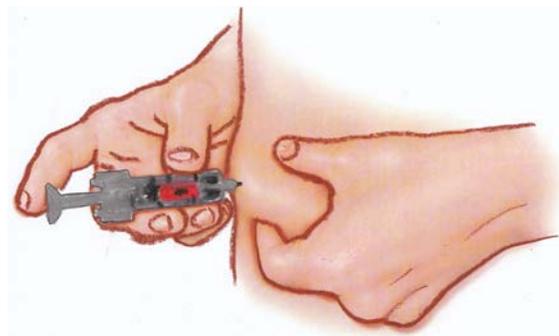
STEP 3

You need to make sure that you inject LMWH into fatty tissue. To do this, pinch (between the thumb and fingers of one hand) a fold of skin on the abdomen (while sitting) or outer thigh (sitting or lying down). Because there is enough fatty tissue in the buttock, pinching a fold of skin is not necessary. LMWH must not be injected into the muscle.



STEP 4

Hold the syringe with the other hand. Insert the entire needle into the fold of skin at a 45-90 degree angle. Then slowly press the plunger down until the full dose of LMWH has been given.



STEP 5

Remove the needle while letting go on the fold of skin. Do not rub or massage the place where you have just put the injection. If you do you might get a bruise. Dispose of the syringe in an appropriate container. The container should be stored away from children. If you do not have an appropriate container, contact your midwife or GP.



Side effects of LMWH

LMWH, like all medications, may have side effects. The most common ones are swelling, bruising and/or occasional drop of blood at the site of injection.

Frequently asked questions

What can I do to reduce the risk of getting a clot?

It is important to keep mobile and well hydrated. Avoid sitting down for long periods of time.

Is it safe to take LMWH during pregnancy?

Yes. LMWH does not cross the placenta to the baby. Many studies have shown that there is no increase risk to the baby in women taking LMWH. If you start LMWH during pregnancy you will need an anaesthetic referral to discuss epidural options during labour

Is it safe to breastfeed while taking LMWH?

Yes. Only very low levels of LMWH are secreted into the breast milk. This level is so low that your baby will not be affected.

Does LMWH interact with any other medication?

LMWH can interact with other medications so it is important to tell your doctor and pharmacist all the medications you are taking.

Can I travel while taking LMWH?

If you need to travel by plane or for a long distance, make sure that you drink plenty of water and that you walk around for a few minutes every hour. You should also wear elasticated support stockings through your journey. Make sure you have enough injections for your holiday and know where the nearest Accident and Emergency department is should you need medical attention. You will need a letter from your doctor to explain that you need to take your injections onto the plane.

How should I store LMWH?

Keep syringes in the pack until it is time to use them. LMWH syringes must be stored at room temperature. Do not store above 25°C.

Keep LMWH where children cannot reach it.

Can I start the contraceptive pill while taking LMWH?

Yes, there is no interaction between any of the contraceptive pills and LMWH.

What do I do if I miss an injection?

You should have your injection as soon as possible, and then take another injection 24 hours after.

What do I do if I think I am going into labour?

If you are due for your LMWH injection and you are having regular painful contractions you should **NOT** take your injection. You should call the Triage line at the Royal Berkshire Maternity Unit in Reading and explain that you are taking LMWH.

Contacts

If you are concern in any way about using LMWH injections you can contact your community midwife or GP, or contact the Triage Line on 0118 322 7403 at the Royal Berkshire Maternity Unit in Reading.

If you have any symptoms suggestive of a DVT or PE, please seek medical attention straight away at your local Accident & Emergency Department or Day Assessment Unit.

Based on a leaflet by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust.

For more information about the Trust, visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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