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NHS Grampian

Lipohypertrophy

(lumpy injection sites)

Information for young people, parents and carers



Paediatric Diabetes Team

What is lipohypertrophy?

Lipohypertrophy is a medical term for a lump or swelling caused by a build up of extra fat. These lumps or swellings can appear where you have repeatedly injected your insulin in the same area. This is a common problem in people with diabetes who require insulin injections or pump therapy.

Lipohypertrophy can be difficult to detect and can often go unnoticed. However, when noticeable, lipohypertrophy doesn't look or feel nice and the fatty lumps can also affect how well your insulin is absorbed. This can lead to erratic blood glucose levels.

It is tempting to keep injecting in the same place as these fatty lumps become less painful over time however, we would discourage this as the lumps can become unsightly and make diabetes control more difficult.

Children and some teenagers may require adult supervision when administering injections or changing pump cannula.

How can I reduce the risk of lipohypertrophy?

Use a fresh needle every time.

The needles you use are designed to be used **once** only. They are very small and sharp and they also have a special lubricant on the needle to make injecting as comfortable as possible and to keep tissue damage to a minimum.

Using a needle more than once blunts the tip and the lubrication no longer works. This makes your injections painful and causes unnecessary tissue damage that can develop into lipohypertrophy.

Injection technique

Always practise good injection technique. Poor technique is one of the causes of lipohypertrophy.

- Make sure you have washed and dried your hands.
- Attach new needle to your insulin pen.
- Perform a “test shot” to make sure the tip of the needle is filled with insulin.
- Choose an appropriate injection site (see pages 4 and 5).
- You may need to pinch the skin depending on the type of needle you are using. Your diabetes nurse will tell you if you need to do this.
- Put the needle in quickly and hold in place for 10 seconds after injection button on pen has been pressed (longer than 10 seconds for larger doses of insulin).
- Dispose of the used needle safely.

Do not let the needle move about when in the skin as this will increase the tissue damage at your injection site.

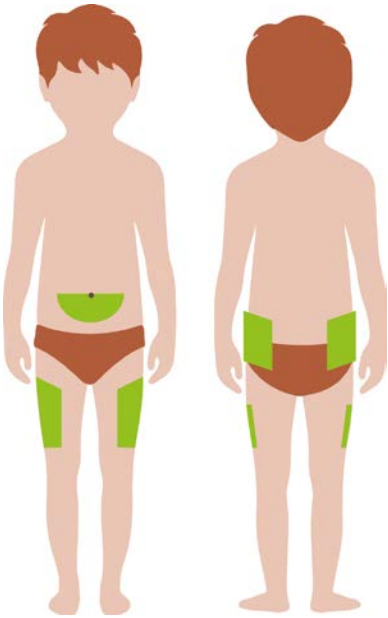
Rotating your injection sites

It is very important that you use different injection sites regularly. Rotate both between and within sites and remember to keep injections a finger's width apart.

The recommended sites are your abdomen (tummy), the upper, outer part of your bottom and the front and outside of your thighs.

If you struggle with site rotation please ask one of the diabetes nurses as we have various tools that could help. The pictures on the next page can be used as a guide.

Recommended injection sites



Injection sites shown in GREEN

Supervision

Children and some teenagers may need an adult to supervise them when administering injections to help make sure they avoid the areas that are affected.

What happens if I develop lipohypertrophy?

If you notice a swelling or lump it is very important to avoid injecting into that area to allow it to recover. This can take 3 months or more. The recovery time depends on the size of the affected area. **Please discuss this with your Diabetes Specialist Nurse.**

When should I contact the team?

If you:

- are unsure about anything in this leaflet.
- find that your blood glucose control is erratic with swings from **hypo** to **hyper**glycaemia.
- have any concerns about lipohypertophy.

You can contact your Diabetes Specialist Nurse (numbers on next two pages).

They will be able to advise you on how to avoid problems and to help you recognise any issues with your injection sites.

Contact telephone numbers

If you have any questions about your child's diabetes or you need further advice, please contact your local Diabetes Nurses (Elgin details on next page):

Aberdeen

Nurses
☎ 01224 552734
Answerphone – accessed daily
during working hours

Emergencies only (during working hours)
☎ 0345 456 6000 ask for bleep 4413

Email
grampian.rachdiabetes@nhs.net
Accessed daily during working hours

Dietitians
☎ 01224 552630
For dietetic advice during working hours

Medical Ward
☎ 01224 550380
Outwith working hours or for immediate advice

Elgin

Nurses
☎ (01343) 567422
Answerphone – accessed daily
during working hours

Email
nhsg.elginpaedsdiabetes@nhs.net
Accessed daily during working hours

Dietitians
☎ (01343) 567350
For dietetic advice during working hours

Medical Ward
☎ 01224 550380
Outwith working hours or for immediate advice

Working hours are **Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm**. Outwith these hours and bank holidays calls will be answered by the on call general paediatric team via your local Medical wards telephone number above.

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1472.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

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