

# Treatment with Heparin Injections (Fragmin®) during pregnancy

Maternity Services

Produced: Feb 2021

Information for patients

Review: Feb 2024

Leaflet number: 765 Version: 1

## What is Fragmin®?

Fragmin® is a modern type of heparin (a type of medicine called an anticoagulant). It is used to treat blood clots or the risk of them occurring. In some situations it can be used to try to reduce the risk of miscarriage.

Fragmin® has to be prescribed by a doctor, and is always given by injection into the fatty layer under the skin (subcutaneous layer). It is usually given once or sometimes twice a day.

## Why do we give Fragmin® in pregnancy and after birth?

During pregnancy the risk of blood clots is increased due to the normal changes occurring in your blood to prepare your body for giving birth. This causes the blood to become more sticky.

After the birth of your baby, the risks remain high as your body adapts to not being pregnant. It is important that you continue Fragmin® treatment during this time. Some women will be started on Fragmin® just to cover the period after giving birth.

Fragmin® is given to women who are thought to have a higher chance of clots because of their medical history, or because of the results of blood tests. Some women are given Fragmin® as part of their treatment because of previous miscarriages or certain pregnancy complications.

## When is Fragmin® given?

Fragmin® treatment may be given during pregnancy and / or for between one and six weeks after your baby's birth, when the risk of clots is highest. Although Fragmin® treatment can be started very early in pregnancy, it is not recommended when planning a pregnancy. This is because of the uncertainty about the length of time it may take you to conceive. We prefer to give any medication for the least time possible, to reduce the risk of side effects.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Are there any risks linked with Fragmin® ?

Fragmin® is considered to be safe to use in pregnancy as it does not cross the placenta and therefore does not affect your baby.

The most common side effect for the mother is a small amount of bruising at the injection site. The risk of bleeding with low-dose Fragmin® due to “thinning” of the blood, is small. Fragmin® does not usually cause bleeding by itself, but bleeding caused by other things, for example from a threatened miscarriage, may be a little heavier.

Women are usually advised to stop having Fragmin® when they start in labour, or to miss a dose on the morning of a planned delivery. An epidural or spinal anaesthetic cannot be given within 12 hours of a dose of Fragmin® (24 hours if having injections twice a day). Fragmin® will usually be started again at least four to six hours after delivery.

The old type of heparin (unfractionated) could sometimes cause osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). This is much less likely with modern (fractionated) heparins, such as Fragmin®, but it is advisable to have plenty of calcium in your diet (for example from milk, cheese and yoghurt).

Around 5% of women get a skin rash at the site of the injection. If this happens, or if there is any unexplained bruising or bleeding, please contact the hospital (contact details are at the back of this leaflet)..

If you have an allergy to Fragmin® , there are other types of injection that can be used instead.

## Important advice

**Tell a nurse or doctor if you notice any of the following side effects:**

- Red spots under your skin, which do not go away when you put pressure on them.
- You have unexplained bruising.
- Your injection site becomes red and itchy.

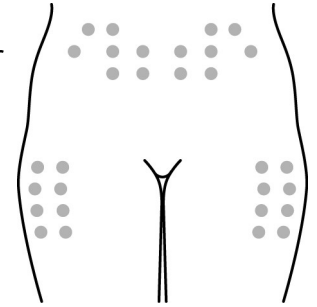
## How is Fragmin® given?

The syringes come ready-prepared with the correct dose for you to give. You will be shown how to give your own injections, and most women (or their partners) manage this very easily. The needle on the syringe is very fine, and although the injection may sting slightly, it is not usually too painful. You will be given a sharps box (a strong plastic box just for syringes) so that you can dispose of the syringes safely.

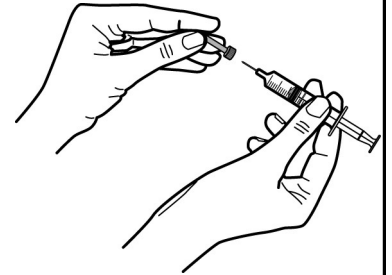
## Instructions:

- Make sure you have a sharps box and cotton wool ball ready for after the injection.
- Wash your hands before giving the injection.
- Sit in a comfortable position so that you are relaxed.
- Select the site for the injection.

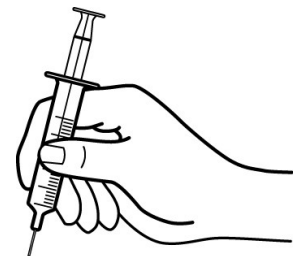
Suitable injection sites include the sides of your tummy (avoiding the area near your belly button) and the front of your thighs. Avoid bruised, scarred, reddened or hard areas. Rotate the sites to avoid skin irritation.



Take the syringe and with your thumb and forefinger carefully remove the rubber covering the needle. Take care not to touch the sterile needle.



Do not remove the air bubble in the pre-filled syringe..  
Hold the syringe halfway down the barrel in one hand.



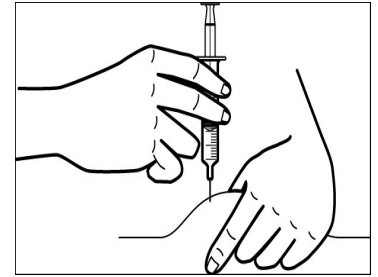
Use your other hand to gently grasp a fold of skin for your injection.  
Hold the skin between your thumb and index finger.



## Instructions (continued)

Hold the syringe at a right angle to the skin, like a dart.

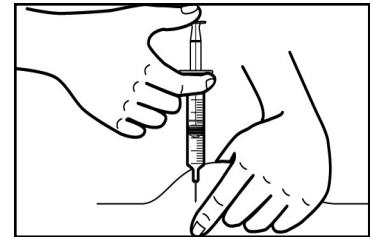
Quickly insert the needle all the way into the skin fold.



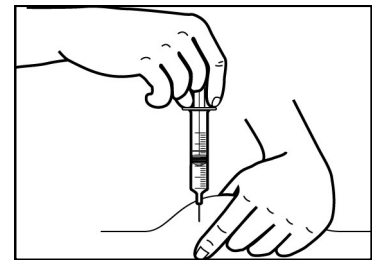
Push the plunger down steadily.

Keep pushing until all of the fluid is injected into the skin.

**Make sure you hold the skin fold throughout the injection.**



Release the skin fold and pull the needle straight out at the same angle that it was inserted.



- Place cotton wool over the injection site and apply constant pressure for two to three minutes. You may find that the area stings afterwards - this is normal.

**To avoid bruising do not rub the injection site after you have injected yourself.**

- Discard the needle in the sharps box and store this out of the reach of children.

**When the container is full to the line, close and lock it and give to your GP, nurse, midwife or the hospital team for disposal. Do not put it in the household rubbish. You should ask for a new sharps box before the old one is completely full.**

- If you forget a dose and are close to your next scheduled dose, skip the missed dose and inject the next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take a double dose.
- You should ask your GP to prescribe any further supplies of Fragmin®. (If your GP is unwilling to do this, please let us know). Your chemist will need at least 24 hours to order the Fragmin®, for you.
- To check that you are on the right dose of Fragmin®, you may need to have a blood test. This will need to be done around three to four hours after your injection.

## How should Fragmin® be stored?

It does not need to be kept refrigerated. Store the Fragmin® syringes at room temperature (between 15 and 30°C).

It is important to keep the stock of injections and the sharps box in a safe place, out of reach of children.

## Other medication

**Do not take any drugs other than those prescribed by your doctor while you are on Fragmin® .**

Always remember to tell any doctors or dentists treating you that you are being treated with Fragmin®.

## What should I do if I am worried or need advice about Fragmin®?

If you have any questions or concerns about your Fragmin® please feel free to contact us on one of the numbers listed below.

## Contact numbers

### Specialist Nurse for Obstetric Haematology

(If you are under the care of the haematology clinic)

Telephone: 0116 258 5990 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4pm)

Mobile: 07983 057833 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm)

If you have been started on these injections by another clinic:

Telephone: 0116 258 6106 (Leicester Royal Infirmary)

Telephone: 0116 258 4829 (Leicester General Hospital)

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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