

Self-administration of your medicines (SAM), including insulin, during a hospital stay

Medicines Management

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: August 2025

Updated: February 2026

Next review: August 2028

Leaflet number: 403 Version: 4.1

What is self-administration?

Leicester's Hospitals is trying to support patients, parents and carers to self-administer medication. This means to give yourself medication instead of hospital staff. This is called self-administration of medicines (SAM). This includes giving yourself insulin while at hospital.

We want patients to be able to do things on their own. We want them to know what is happening with their medication. This will be helpful if you have a long term condition like diabetes or Parkinson's disease.

If you are pregnant and have been diagnosed with diabetes, the Antenatal Clinic will assess you first to make sure you are happy to self-administer your insulin.

We will teach you how to take your medicine. We will help you with any changes to them. This will help you to manage easily with your medicines when you leave hospital.

How do I self-administer my medication?

A nurse, midwife, or pharmacist will check to make sure you can give yourself your medicine safely.

We will give you a medicines chart. This explains what medicines to take and when you need to take them. This is for you to keep and to use when you are taking your medications.

Your nurse/ midwife will check with you that you have taken your medication.

Hospital staff will let you know if your dose or medicines change. They will update this on your medicines chart. Let your nurse or midwife if you start to run out of your medication. They will order more for you.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

We will give you either a key, fob, or your own personal code for the digilock on your medicines locker. This is so that only you have access to your medicines. You should keep this safe and not share it with anyone else.

Self-administering insulin for patients with diabetes

Insulin and needles:

- You do not need to lock up your insulin. But make sure you to keep your insulin and needles out of sight.
- Make sure you have enough needles. When you have used one, put this in a special bin called a sharps bin.

Checking your blood:

- You can check your own blood sugar with a blood sugar machine and strips. The hospital cannot give you strips.
- Tell the nurses and midwives your blood sugar numbers. They will write this down.
- The nurses and midwives can check your blood sugar for you if you do not have a blood sugar machine or strips.

Special blood sugar monitors:

- You may have a special monitor that sticks to your skin (like a CGM or flash monitor). You can keep using this.
- These special monitors are not accepted for use in hospital and hospital staff will still need to check your blood sugar using a hospital machine.
- The hospital cannot give you these special monitors to use.

Snacks:

- Keep some snacks or treatments for low blood sugar with you.
- If you need sugary snacks or drinks, ask a nurse or midwife.
- Let staff know if you had to treat high or low blood sugar.

Glucose levels:

- Illness can affect blood glucose levels. The normal range for people with diabetes admitted to hospital is between 6 to 12 mmol/L. It is 4 to 7.8 mmol/L in pregnancy. We know this may not be your usual level of control.
- Please let a member of staff know if your levels are high or low for you.

If you become unable to manage your diabetes safely in hospital, the nursing staff will need to take over.

What if I make a mistake?

The nursing, midwifery and pharmacy teams are here to support you. If you think you have made a mistake or need some help, or would like to stop giving yourself medicine, please talk to us about this. Parents/ carers should follow the same process.



Remember:

Medicines can be dangerous if not used properly. It is your responsibility to keep them safe and locked away.

- If a visitor or patient tries to take your medicines please tell a member of staff **right away**.
- You can keep your insulin with you. You must keep your insulin and needles out of sight in a safe place.
- Take the medicines as shown on your medicines chart.
- Tell a member of staff if you forget to take a dose, or took a dose at the wrong time, or took the wrong medication.
- We may use your medicines and those given by the hospital. Medicines must be in boxes (not dosette boxes) and labelled with the correct instructions on how to take them. If you do not have these, we will give you a supply.
- For medicines that you only take 'as required', remember to tell nursing/ midwifery staff what time you took a dose.
- Ask staff if you have questions about your medicines.
- When going home, do not take your medicines from the locker until staff check them.
- Before you go home please return your key/ fob for your locker to your nurse/ midwife. Or let them know you have finished with your personal code for the digilock.
- Not all of our wards are able to support the self-administration of medicines scheme. You may not be able to continue with self-administering if you move to another ward.

Giving us your feedback

We would be grateful for feedback on your experience with SAM. You can do this by completing a short online survey which will only take a few minutes. Please access the survey by using your smart phone to scan this QR code or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4m74v6ke>



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net