

Oxfordshire Children's Diabetes Service  
*Children's Hospital, Oxford*  
*Horton General Hospital, Banbury*

# Annual Review

## Information for parents and carers

Every year, around the time of your child's diagnosis, you will have a slightly different clinic appointment which we call an 'Annual Review'.

### **The Annual Review includes:**

- Finding out how your child is feeling about their diabetes and if it is getting in the way of anything important, such as school trips or sports.
- An opportunity to make sure you have up to date information on managing situations, such as illness, etc.
- A few extra tests to check for things that are more common in children with diabetes, as well as watching for things that we know can affect people with diabetes.

## What extra tests will my child have?

Children with diabetes are more likely to have coeliac disease and thyroid problems, so these are both tested for at the Annual Review with blood tests. **We do this for all children, regardless of their age.**

- **Coeliac disease** – This is a condition where the gut becomes damaged because of a reaction to gluten, which is contained in some grains, especially wheat. The damaged gut is then unable to properly absorb nutrients into the body.

If untreated, it can cause poor growth, anaemia, thinning of bones and other problems. Coeliac disease is confirmed by an examination of the bowel, which will be explained to you and your child (if appropriate). About 8% (8 in 100) of children who have diabetes will also have coeliac disease.

- **Thyroid problems** – This is usually due to an underactive thyroid gland. The treatment for this is very simple, with small tablets taken once a day.

If the result of either blood test is abnormal, you will be telephoned and we may ask to do a repeat test.

## Additional checks when your child is over 12 years old

Aiming to keep your child's blood glucose (BG) levels in the target range (between 4 and 7mmol/l for most of the time) reduces the chance of future complications of diabetes. We don't usually see these complications in young children. However, we like to keep an eye on this, just in case, by carrying out certain checks every year from the age of 12 years.

### **The four checks we complete once your child is over 12 year of age:**

- **Being aware of your child's feet**

We will ask your child about problems with their feet and will give you both an information leaflet about how to look after their feet. If there are any concerns, we will look at your child's feet and do some extra checks on nerves and blood supply.

- **Checking eyes**

Diabetes can cause problems with the tiny blood vessels at the back of your child's eyes, so their vision will be checked. They may need to have eye drops put in, which will help the blood vessels at the back of their eye to be photographed with a special camera. This picture will be reviewed and compared every year. You will receive a letter with your child's results.

If your child's blood glucose levels have generally been in target range, changes to their eyesight might not be due to diabetes. Some changes are normal and can happen even when you don't have diabetes.

Even if there are changes in both eyes, this can be reversed by having blood glucose levels closer to the targets. We can all work together to help your child with this.

- **Additional blood test**

This looks at the amount of lipids (fats) in the blood. This will have been done at their first annual review following diagnosis, regardless of their age, but will now be repeated every year. Some young people with diabetes have high lipid levels, particularly if their blood glucose levels have been high for a while. This is important, as these lipids are linked with furring up of the large blood vessels, which can lead to heart disease and strokes. We will let you know if your child's lipid levels are too high.

- **Urine tests**

We will provide your child with a urine sample bottle. Ideally they should try to do the first wee of the day in the bottle. If it is easier, this can be done into a clean bowl or jug and then transferred into the urine bottle.

If you forget to do this, we will ask your child to provide the urine sample in clinic. As this is a sample taken later in the day, we sometimes get false results, but it is better to check this sample than no sample at all.

The urine is examined for tiny amounts of protein (microalbuminuria), which is the first sign of diabetic kidney disease. We will let you know by telephone if we need to repeat the sample.

## How is your child feeling?

Your child will also be asked to complete a short form about how they are feeling at the moment and if they have any worries. This is so the doctor can help with their emotional health, alongside their physical health.

We know that diabetes is very hard work for children and families, so we can make a referral for your child and/or you to see one of the psychologists in the diabetes team.

## As your child gets older...

We know that as your child gets older there are other things that can both be affected by (or have an effect on) their diabetes. We will start to talk to you and your child about these in their Annual Review appointments too.

- **Smoking**

We will ask about smoking in your family. This is because we know that smoking increases the risks of many of the problems that we hope your child will be able to avoid by aiming for target blood glucose levels.

- **Contraception/Sexual Health**

This applies to both boys and girls. We will talk with your child about preventing pregnancy and taking care to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.

Your child's Annual Review appointment is likely to take longer than a routine appointment, because there is so much to fit in. Please allow extra time; approximately two hours. We understand this is quite a long time, but completing this once a year is important for your child's long term health.

If you have any questions, please contact your Diabetes Specialist Nurse (see contact sheet for telephone numbers).

If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

*Making a difference across our hospitals*

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

