

BLOOD CLOTS:

Planning for Your Labour and Birth



WHY ARE YOU READING THIS?

If you are taking blood thinner medicine in pregnancy, your labour and birth need some extra planning. This leaflet explains what to expect.

WHY DOES THIS NEED PLANNING?

Blood thinner medicine affects how easily you bleed. Your care team needs to plan the timing carefully, so that:

- You are protected from clots
- You are not at higher risk of bleeding during the birth
- Pain relief such as an epidural can be given safely

IF YOUR BIRTH IS PLANNED (INDUCTION OR CAESAREAN)

If you have a planned induction or a planned caesarean, your doctor will give you a clear date and time to have your last injection before the birth.

- This is usually around 12 or 24 hours before the planned procedure
- Do not have your usual injection on the day of the procedure unless your doctor tells you to
- Write the plan down or keep it somewhere easy to find

IF LABOUR STARTS ON ITS OWN

If your labour starts naturally, before a planned date:

- Do not have your next injection
- Call your maternity unit straight away and tell them you are in labour
- Bring your medicine and any notes about your dose with you to hospital
- The team will tell you when it is safe to restart

PAIN RELIEF AND EPIDURALS

An epidural is a common form of pain relief in labour. It involves a small tube placed near your spine. Because you are on blood thinner medicine, timing matters:

- There needs to be a gap between your last injection and having an epidural
- This gap keeps the epidural safe
- Your anaesthetist and midwife will check the timing before going ahead

If you are worried about pain relief options, ask your midwife early, so a plan is ready in advance.

WHAT THE TEAM WILL CHECK

Throughout your labour, the team will:

- Know your blood thinner dose and when you last had it
- Check it is safe to go ahead with any pain relief
- Watch for any signs of unusual bleeding
- Plan when to restart your medicine after the birth

REMEMBER

- * Your care team will make a clear, written plan with you in advance
- * Always tell the team you are on blood thinner medicine when you arrive
- * If labour starts early, skip your next dose and call the hospital
- * Ask questions early, so you know what to expect

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR PLAN FOR LABOUR,
ASK YOUR MIDWIFE OR DOCTOR TO GO THROUGH IT WITH YOU.**

