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24/07/2025

Deputy Toibin
Dáil Éireann,
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PQ 35518/25: To ask the Minister for Health the protocols in place to review and adjust thyroid medication dosages for women following childbirth, particularly where the dosage was increased during pregnancy; in the absence of protocols, the measures that will be taken to ensure that postnatal thyroid treatment is appropriately monitored to avoid adverse effects such as depression and suicidal ideation; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 35520/25: To ask the Minister for Health the clinical guidelines currently in place for general practitioners and endocrinologists regarding the monitoring and adjustment of thyroid hormone levels in postpartum women; and if updated guidance will be issued to ensure safer prescribing practices.

Dear Deputy Toibin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position on the various areas and issues you raised.

There are well established guidelines (1) and pathways for management of women with thyroid disorders in pregnancy. Women who enter pregnancy with thyroid dysfunction on medication are co-managed by their obstetrician and general practitioner. Women who are diagnosed with thyroid dysfunction in pregnancy are managed by their obstetrician and or endocrinologist as per local hospital protocols. In both cases thyroid function is monitored at intervals during pregnancy and medication and dose of adjusted accordingly. In more complex cases further endocrinology advice is sought in pregnancy. In the post-partum period these medications may require further adjustment which is usually managed in primary care. In some instances a follow up visit with endocrinology is scheduled, again depending on complexity.

(1) Chan, S.-Y., Marsh, M.S., Gilbert, J., Boelaert, K., Evans, C., Dhillon-Smith, R. and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2025), Management of Thyroid Disorders in Pregnancy. BJOG, 132: e130-e161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.18088>

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

MaryJo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme