

## FreeStyle Libre® – FAQs for General Practice

### What is FreeStyle Libre®?



The FreeStyle Libre® flash glucose monitoring system is a device for the self-monitoring of glucose levels for people **with Type 1 diabetes (T1) aged 4 years and over**. Unlike traditional finger-prick devices, FreeStyle Libre® measures the glucose level in the interstitial fluid, via sensor that sits just under the skin. It can provide a near-continuous record, which is produced by scanning the sensor with the reader- device, as and when required.

The sensor is a few centimetres in diameter and is designed to stay in place for 14 days. It is applied to the skin, usually on the upper arm. A thin (0.4 mm), flexible and sterile fibre within the sensor is inserted in the skin to a depth of 5 mm; most people have described this as being painless. The fibre draws interstitial fluid from the muscle into the sensor, where glucose levels are automatically measured every minute and stored at 15-minute intervals for 8 hours. Glucose levels can be seen at any time by scanning the reader over the sensor.

### Is interstitial fluid (ISF) an adequate replacement to blood glucose testing?

Interstitial fluid-based glucose readings are a reliable indicator of blood glucose levels

- The physiological lag in ISF glucose, with respect to changes in blood glucose, is about 5-10 minutes
- The average lag time of the FreeStyle Libre system is approximately 5 minutes, which is unlikely to impact routine day-to-day treatment decisions

### Is this a replacement for finger-prick blood glucose testing?

It is not a complete substitute for blood glucose testing. Finger-prick measurements are required in certain circumstances, including:

- during times of rapidly changing glucose levels when interstitial fluid glucose levels may not accurately reflect blood glucose levels,
- when scanned glucose results do not correspond with the user's symptoms,
- to use the bolus calculator function,
- where the FreeStyle Libre® reader indicates a low glucose reading.

## Will there be a need to prescribe blood glucose test strips?

Yes, initially as a patient becomes familiar with the Freestyle Libre system and for the circumstances given above. However the expectation will be that the use of test strips will decrease, therefore quantities on prescription should be reduced.

Please note that the DVLA now allows insulin-dependent drivers to take glucose levels using flash glucose monitoring, so there is no need to provide test strips for the purposes of driving.

## Are there any training resources on FreeStyle Libre® for GP Practice staff?

Yes, on-line training, see links below.

1. <https://freestylediabetes.co.uk/health-care-professionals/education>
2. <https://progress.freestylediabetes.co.uk/>

## Can I initiate FreeStyle Libre® prescribing?

Initiation of patients on FreeStyle Libre® should be done by local diabetes specialist teams **ONLY**.

Indications as per NHS England criteria:

- ✓ People with Type 1 diabetes OR with any form of diabetes on hemodialysis and on insulin treatment who, in either of the above, are clinically indicated as requiring intensive monitoring >8 times daily, as demonstrated on a meter download/review over the past 3 months OR with diabetes associated with cystic fibrosis on insulin treatment
- ✓ Pregnant women with Type 1 Diabetes - 12 months in total inclusive of post-delivery period.
- ✓ People with Type 1 diabetes unable to routinely self-monitor blood glucose due to disability who require carers to support glucose monitoring and insulin management.
- ✓ People with Type 1 diabetes for whom the specialist diabetes MDT determines have occupational (e.g. working in insufficiently hygienic conditions to safely facilitate finger-prick testing) or psychosocial circumstances that warrant a 6-month trial of Libre with appropriate adjunct support.
- ✓ Previous self-funders of Flash Glucose Monitors with Type 1 diabetes where those with clinical responsibility for their diabetes care are satisfied that their clinical history suggests that they would have satisfied one or more of these criteria prior to them commencing use of Flash Glucose Monitoring had these criteria been in place prior to April 2019 AND has shown improvement in HbA1c since self-funding.
- ✓ For those with Type 1 diabetes and recurrent severe hypoglycemia or impaired awareness of hypoglycemia, NICE suggests that Continuous Glucose Monitoring with an alarm is the standard. Other evidence-based alternatives with NICE guidance or NICE TA support are pump therapy, psychological support, structured education, islet transplantation and whole

pancreas transplantation. However, if the person with diabetes and their clinician consider that a Flash Glucose Monitoring system would be more appropriate for the individual's specific situation, then this can be considered.

## Do I need to refer patients for FreeStyle Libre® initiation who are already under a local diabetes specialist service?

**No.** Patients meeting these criteria can discuss FreeStyle Libre® at their next routine follow up appointment with their diabetes specialist service. Diabetes services are not expected to offer additional appointments to discuss suitability of FreeStyle Libre®.

Only Patients with T1 Diabetes who are not under the care of a diabetes specialist service will need to be referred if requesting FreeStyle Libre®.

## Will the diabetes specialist service prescribe FreeStyle Libre®?

Patients initiated on FreeStyle Libre® will receive the reader and 1x sensor from the diabetes specialist service.

## When should I take over prescribing FreeStyle Libre®?

You should prescribe FreeStyle Libre® sensors **after** you have received the relevant request form from the local diabetes specialist service.

- [APC ClinDoc 001 - Criteria for initiation, continuation and discontinuation of Flash Glucose Monitoring System](#): Appendix 2 - GP Letter

## How many sensors should I prescribe per month?

Prescribe 2x sensors per month, on ACUTE prescriptions, until confirmation by the specialist diabetes service that improvement in patient outcomes has been met (at 6 months).

The Pip Code is 405-9028.

## Do I write a prescription for those patients currently purchasing FreeStyle Libre® sensors from 1st April 2019?

Patients **currently self-funding** FreeStyle Libre® and who fulfill one of the above criteria need to be reviewed by the diabetes specialist service. The patient's clinical history must suggest that they would have satisfied one or more of the criteria prior to them commencing use of Flash Glucose Monitoring, had these criteria been in place prior to April 2019, AND has shown improvement in HbA1c since self-funding.

## My patient has seen a provider from another area and I have been asked to

## prescribe Freestyle Libre® sensors, can I prescribe?

**Yes**, upon written confirmation from any secondary care specialist diabetes service that the patient fulfils one of the NHS criteria set out in [APC ClinDoc 001 - Criteria for initiation, continuation and discontinuation of Flash Glucose Monitoring System](#)

Refer to the *Can I initiate FreeStyle Libre® prescribing?* section above.

## My patient is new to area and was previously receiving Freestyle Libre® sensors on FP10, can I prescribe?

A newly registered Type 1 diabetes patient should be referred to the local specialist diabetes team, the referral should request written confirmation that eligibility criteria for continued supply of Freestyle sensors on FP10 is being met. Sensors may be prescribed on acute prescriptions until the specialist appointment date.

## My patient has had their 6-month review by local diabetes specialist service, what happens now?

If it is decided that a patient should continue on FreeStyle Libre® after the 6 month review, the patient should be monitored annually in line local standard monitoring for patients with Type 1 diabetes. The local diabetes specialist service should write to you to inform you that they are happy for the patient to remain on FreeStyle Libre®. Prescribe 2x sensors per month, on REPEAT prescriptions.

If it is decided that a patient should not continue on FreeStyle Libre® after the 6 month review by the local diabetes specialist service, no further prescriptions should be issued.

## How do patients dispose of sensors?

Used sensors should be put in a sharps bin.

## Faulty sensors

If a sensor fails before the end of its 14 day life, the patient should call the Abbott customer care line on 0800 170 1177 on the day that any problem is identified. If the sensor is faulty it will be replaced. Faulty sensors should not be replaced with NHS prescriptions.