

Flash and real time continuous glucose monitoring: NICE diabetes guidance update

Information for patients

NICE Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes guidance updates (March 2022) recommend increased access to flash (Freestyle Libre) and real-time continuous glucose monitoring devices. This patient information leaflet explains the guidance update and how patients attending Diabetes Clinic at King's may access the device they may want or need. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact your diabetes healthcare provider.

Q: What has been published?

A: NICE stands for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence – an independent organisation that makes recommendations about how to best treat different health conditions, including diabetes. Its recommendations on diabetes are written by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, and by people who have diabetes or care for someone with diabetes.

NICE has published updated clinical guidelines for clinicians and commissioners about how to manage [type 1 diabetes](#) and [type 2 diabetes](#). These guidelines include changes to recommendations on diabetes medications and methods of monitoring blood glucose levels for adults living with diabetes in England. [The following information relates to blood glucose monitoring.](#)

Adults with type 1 diabetes

The NICE guidelines recommend that if you are 18 years or older with type 1 diabetes, that you be offered a choice of intermittently scanned glucose monitoring (otherwise known as 'flash', for example Freestyle libre) or real-time continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) on the NHS. You should be offered CGM if you are pregnant and have type 1 diabetes.

Adults with type 2 diabetes

The NICE guidelines recommend that if you are 18 years or older with type 2 diabetes and use insulin two or more times each day, you should be offered of intermittently scanned glucose monitoring (otherwise known as 'flash', for example Freestyle libre) if any of the below apply to you:

- you have recurrent hypoglycaemia (recurrent events that occur each week or month and have an impact on quality of life) or severe hypoglycaemia (episodes that require assistance from another person to treat).

- you have impaired hypoglycaemia awareness
- you have a condition or disability (including a learning disability) that means you cannot self-monitor your blood glucose levels by capillary blood glucose monitoring (fingerprick testing) but could use a Flash device (or have it scanned for you). This includes people receiving dialysis.
- you would otherwise be advised to self-measure at least 8 times a day

If you have insulin-treated type 2 diabetes and require help from a care worker or healthcare professional to monitor glucose levels, you should be offered a flash device.

NICE's guideline recommendations vary in strength, based on how good the evidence there is for how well a treatment works and how much it costs. The benefits and risks (for example side effects) of a treatment are also important. A NICE recommendation does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or carer. The new guidance for glucose monitoring is "to offer" these technologies. NICE uses 'offer' (and similar words) when it is confident that, for the vast majority of patients, an intervention will do more good than harm, and be cost-effective. NICE uses similar forms of words (for example, 'do not offer...') when it is confident that an intervention will not be of benefit for most patients.

Q: When does this guidance come into force?

A: NICE issues lots of different types of guidance, including "Clinical Guidelines" and "Technology Appraisals". The NHS must ensure that technology appraisals are available within three months (unless otherwise specified) of the publication date. As the new recommendations for glucose monitoring are clinical guidance – rather than technology appraisals – there is no obligation on clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) or clinicians to implement it by any particular date. However, all hospitals in London are already discussing how to implement these new guidelines in order to make these technologies available as soon as possible. NICE has regional implementation consultants who will work with hospitals and CCGs to help put the guidance into practice. This will apply to those who are currently self-funding as well.

Q: Will all people with type 1 diabetes, and eligible people with type 2 diabetes, be able to access CGM or flash on the NHS?

A: Yes, in time – at the discretion of your healthcare team.

For those with type 1 diabetes, there are no longer any criteria to meet to access CGM and flash. NICE guidance is aimed at healthcare professionals, and CCGs which determine what healthcare services are provided in your local area, to show them the best research-evidenced treatment for various conditions. For those with type 2 diabetes, there are criteria described above that need to be met to access CGM and flash. Your consultant, diabetes specialist nurse or dietitian will make a clinical judgement which will take into consideration the recommendations by NICE and their professional opinion on whether or not it will help you.

For people who are already attending diabetes clinics elsewhere, rather than at King's, plans are currently being developed on how these technologies can be made available within existing healthcare services closer to you. Please discuss this with your usual diabetes healthcare provider.

Q: Which flash and CGM devices are included in the recommendations?

A: All of them. NICE has looked at categories of devices and made recommendations on the type of device, not the individual brand. Abbott's Freestyle Libre is the only flash device available right

now but if other brands become available then this will cover those other brands too. References to CGM cover all brands of CGM on the market in the UK.

Q: How can I access the device I want or need?

A: Ask at your next clinic appointment, whether that's a face to face appointment or online/phone. There may be training to arrange and undertake. Please be patient with your clinic as we will be working hard to get people started on the appropriate device – on top of our normal clinic duties.

Q: Can I change clinic appointment to get what I want sooner?

A: No, as this will not speed up the process of obtaining CGM or flash glucose monitoring. We appreciate that this may be frustrating for you, but many people attending our clinics are in the same position. NICE estimates that the new guidance will affect 250,000 people living with type 1 diabetes and 193,000 people living with type 2 diabetes across the country. King's is using remote training and technology starts to try to make this a faster and easier process.

Q: What about ongoing funding? Can a device be taken away from me?

A: As with any health condition, if you are not benefitting from using a device (or drug, for example) then it would be expected to be stopped. To avoid this happening, make sure you use the device fully, including checking the reading several times a day, acting on the readings in a timely way, checking the (usually web-based) review tool (which will show patterns and areas of concern), and asking for further training if you feel you need it. Make sure your diabetes specialist notes down at each visit that you continue to benefit from using the device. If they cannot write this, then they may arrange some extra training for you.

Further information

Learn more about glucose monitoring with [flash](#) and with [CGM](#) and visit the [DTN-UK virtual showroom](#), [JDRF](#) and [Diabetes UK sites](#).

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS
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If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email: kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net