

**South East London Area Prescribing Committee
FreeStyle Libre[®] Flash Glucose Monitoring system
Frequently asked questions for patients
October 2017**

1. What is FreeStyle Libre[®]?

FreeStyle Libre[®] 'flash glucose monitoring system' measures glucose levels in people with diabetes using a sensor applied to the skin. FreeStyle Libre[®] is an alternative to finger-prick blood glucose testing, and can produce a near-continuous record of measurements which can be accessed on demand.¹ Readings are taken by scanning the sensor with a FreeStyle Libre[®] reader or some mobile phones [android mobile phones with 'Near-field Communication' (NFC) capabilities].

People using FreeStyle Libre[®] still need to use finger-prick blood glucose testing:

- when they feel unwell; for example when they have the flu, diarrhoea or are vomiting
- when the FreeStyle Libre[®] reader shows low glucose readings (hypoglycaemia) or warns that hypoglycaemia is likely
- when symptoms do not match meter readings
- before they drive and during driving (to meet Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency [DVLA] requirements)

2. Who has had access to FreeStyle Libre[®] before November 2017?

GPs and other prescribers are not currently able to prescribe Freestyle Libre on the NHS. People may have chosen to self-fund FreeStyle Libre[®] by purchasing it directly from the manufacturer (Abbott).

3. What changes on 1st November 2017?

On 1st November 2017, Freestyle Libre[®] sensors will be added to the NHS 'Drug Tariff' therefore it would be possible for GPs and other prescribers to prescribe FreeStyle Libre[®] sensors on the NHS but only with local health group approval. The 'Drug Tariff' is a complete list of medicines and medical devices that can be prescribed on the NHS.

4. If a drug or device 'can' be prescribed, does it mean it 'should' be prescribed?

Not necessarily. There are lots of drugs and devices that can be prescribed but not all offer good value for money to the NHS (this is known as being cost-effective). The NHS has processes in place to identify cost-effective drugs or devices; these are then recommended nationally (e.g. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE] guidance) or locally.

5. What does NICE say about FreeStyle Libre[®]?

NICE have not provided national guidance on the use of this device. They issued a 'Medtech innovation briefing' which summarised the costs, evidence base and perceived benefits, however, it did not include a recommendation.

6. What is the NHS in London doing about FreeStyle Libre[®]?

The NHS in London is keen to avoid variability in availability depending where patients live. In order to achieve this aim, a London-wide agreement is required. Specialist clinicians in South East London (SEL) will be working with diabetes networks in London organisations, which include patient representatives living with diabetes, to establish which patients are most likely to benefit from FreeStyle Libre[®]. When this is agreed, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) will be asked to consider FreeStyle Libre[®] alongside other drugs, devices or services that are also competing for access to their limited funding.

This process will ensure that local decisions are robust and informed by a review of evidence to demonstrate clinical and cost-effectiveness. It is not possible to place an exact completion date on these discussions, but clinicians and commissioners will be meeting regularly over the coming months and updates will be circulated via normal communication routes.

If accepted for funding and in line with Diabetes UKs advice, such patients will be closely monitored (audited) to determine if their blood glucose can be maintained with optimal limits. This will be a requirement for long-term use and will be subject to yearly review.

7. Should patients ask GPs and other prescribers to prescribe FreeStyle Libre®?

The health community in South East London ask that patients do not request FreeStyle Libre® from their GP and other prescribers in their GP practice. Patients who chose to self-fund Freestyle Libre® should continue to do so.

This advice will change when the NHS in London has established which groups of patients are most likely to benefit from FreeStyle Libre® (i.e. the patients in whom FreeStyle Libre® is likely to be cost-effective) and local funding is secured. The work outlined above will be taken forward as quickly as possible. It should not be assumed that people who chose to self-fund FreeStyle Libre® will meet criteria for NHS provision and therefore some people may need to continue to self-fund.

8. Will this interim position statement affect those currently funded for Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) by the NHS?

This interim position statement will have no impact on patients currently funded for Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) by the NHS.

References

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. MIB110: FreeStyle Libre for glucose monitoring. (2017). Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/mib110/chapter/Summary>. (Accessed: 16.10.17)

Acknowledgements: The SEL APC would like to thank the North Central London Joint Formulary Committee for sharing their FAQ document on which our document is based.