

South East London Flash Glucose Monitoring using FreeStyle Libre® frequently asked questions (FAQ) document

This FAQ document is designed to help support you with any questions you may have about using the currently available flash glucose monitoring system, FreeStyle Libre®. If you have any further questions, please contact your specialist diabetes team.

Will my FreeStyle Libre® readings be the same as my blood glucose (sugar) levels when using my finger-prick blood glucose testing kit?

- FreeStyle Libre® measures glucose levels in the interstitial fluid (the fluid between cells under the skin)
- Checking your glucose levels with your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit measures glucose levels in capillaries (blood vessels)

Therefore the readings can be different, especially if blood glucose levels are rising or falling. Where readings are different and you are unsure which reading to go by, for decision making, use blood glucose levels.

How often do I need to scan the sensor?

FreeStyle Libre® gives you the freedom to scan your glucose levels as many times as you want to. However, in line with national criteria set by NHS England, you will need to agree to scan glucose levels **no less than 8 times per day** and use the sensor more than 70% of the time. To get the most out of your FreeStyle Libre®, you should wear the sensor continuously.

What are trend arrows in the FreeStyle Libre® system?

The FreeStyle Libre® system presents trend arrow data as icons on the reader. Trend arrows indicate rates of glucose change. Your diabetes team will provide education on how to use the arrows.

Are there any times when I will need to perform finger-prick blood glucose testing?

As FreeStyle Libre® measures glucose levels in the interstitial fluid, it is not a complete substitute for blood glucose testing. Finger-prick blood glucose testing is still required in certain circumstances, including:

- If your symptoms do not match your FreeStyle Libre® glucose result. Do not ignore symptoms that may be due to low or high blood glucose levels
- To use bolus calculators
- During times of rapidly changing glucose levels e.g. during illness as interstitial fluid glucose levels, may not accurately reflect blood glucose levels
- Where the FreeStyle Libre® reader indicates a low glucose reading
- In order to confirm hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose levels) or impending hypoglycaemia as reported by FreeStyle Libre®
- To meet Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) [requirements](#)

You will also need to perform finger-prick blood glucose tests if you are unable to scan your sensor. Therefore you need to ensure you carry your blood glucose meter and blood glucose test strips at all times.

Troubleshooting

What should I do if I have a skin reaction from the sensor?

Skin symptoms are generally mild but in a few cases can be severe. Gently remove the sensor with warm water to avoid trauma to the skin. If necessary, baby oil or a moisturiser can be used to remove the adhesive. In some cases adhesive removal products may be required. Users should change the skin position of the sensor every 14 days.

Some individuals may be sensitive to the adhesive that keeps the FreeStyle Libre® sensor attached to the skin and are applying barrier creams, patches and sprays before attaching the sensor to reduce skin reactions. These barrier methods have not been tested by the manufacturer and may therefore affect the performance of the device. If you experience a skin reaction, please contact your community pharmacist for further information or ask your specialist diabetes team for advice on the measures you should take so that the performance of your device is not affected.

If you notice significant skin irritation around or under your sensor (for example, redness, itching, blistering), remove the sensor and stop using the FreeStyle Libre® system. Contact your healthcare professional before continuing to use the FreeStyle Libre® system.

If you are no longer able to check your glucose levels using FreeStyle Libre®, please inform your GP and specialist diabetes team and continue to check your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit.

The manufacturer of FreeStyle Libre® system has confirmed they have revised the formulation of the adhesive, which will be available in the UK from April 2019.

What should I do if the sensor causes bruising or bleeding?

Applying the sensor may cause some bruising or bleeding. If you have bleeding that does not stop, the sensor should be removed and a new one applied to a different site. If the bleeding is recurrent or if you have any concerns, contact your GP practice or specialist diabetes team.

If you are no longer able to check your glucose levels using FreeStyle Libre®, please inform your GP and specialist diabetes team and continue to check your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit.

What should I do if the sensor falls off?

If the sensor falls off, please contact the Abbott (manufacturer of FreeStyle Libre®) Customer Careline on 0800 170 1177. Advise the Customer Careline team you have been prescribed your sensors on a NHS prescription. Please keep the sensor that has fallen off and follow the instructions given by the Abbott Customer Careline representative.

Abbott will be able to advise you further on their replacement policy. You should receive any replacement sensor(s) from Abbott within 3-5 days.

If you are no longer able to check your glucose levels using FreeStyle Libre®, please inform your GP and specialist diabetes team and continue to check your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit.

What should I do if the sensor stops working?

The sensor is working correctly if you can get a glucose reading after a 1 second scan.

If you do not get a glucose reading, you may get a number of different error messages on the display of the reader, for example:

- **'Scan Error'** message. This means that the reader was unable to communicate with the sensor. If this happens, try scanning the sensor again. Note: You may need to move away from potential sources of electromagnetic interference, for example magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).
- **'Sensor Error'** message. This means that the system is unable to provide a glucose reading. Try scanning again in 10 minutes.
- **'Check Sensor'** message. This may occur when the sensor tip may not be under your skin. Try to start your sensor again. If the reader displays **'Check Sensor'** again, your sensor was not applied properly. Remove this sensor and apply and start a new sensor.

Your user's manual will be able to give you further information on all error messages that may be displayed on the reader.

If you continue to have a problem with the sensor, please contact the Abbott (manufacturer of FreeStyle Libre®) Customer Careline on 0800 170 1177. Please keep the faulty FreeStyle Libre® sensor and follow the instructions given by the Abbott Customer Careline representative.

If the problems cannot be resolved and you are no longer able to check your glucose levels using FreeStyle Libre®, please inform your GP and specialist diabetes team and continue to check your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit.

What should I do if I think there is a problem with the sensor?

If you think there is a problem with the sensor, please contact the Abbott (manufacturer of FreeStyle Libre®) Customer Careline on 0800 170 1177. Please keep the faulty FreeStyle Libre® sensor and follow the instructions given by the Abbott Customer Careline representative.

If the problems cannot be resolved and you are no longer able to check your glucose levels using FreeStyle Libre®, please inform your GP and specialist diabetes team and continue to check your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit.

What should I do if I run out of sensors?

You should be prescribed 2 sensors to cover you for 28 days on the NHS. Each sensor lasts for 14 days, therefore it is very unlikely that you will run out of sensors. If you do run out of sensors, please continue to monitor your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit. To access more sensors:

- **If you run out of sensors within the first six weeks of using FreeStyle Libre®,** please contact your specialist diabetes team for a prescription for additional sensors. Please do not contact your GP practice as they will not be able to prescribe the sensors for you as your care has not been transferred to them.
- **If you run out of sensors more than six weeks after starting FreeStyle Libre®,** please contact your GP practice for a prescription for additional sensors.

Can I wear the FreeStyle Libre® Sensor while taking a shower or bath?

Sensors can be worn while bathing, showering or swimming. Don't take the sensors deeper than 1m (3 feet) in water. The sensors should not be submerged in water for more than 30 minutes.

Who should I contact if I am no longer using Freestyle Libre®?

If you have stopped using Freestyle Libre®, contact your specialist diabetes team and your GP surgery to let them know. Please continue to monitor your blood glucose levels using your finger-prick blood glucose testing kit. Please dispose of your FreeStyle Libre® sensors, sensor applicators and sensor pack as detailed below.

Safe disposal

How do I safely dispose of the Freestyle Libre® sensors, sensor applicators and the sensor packs?

Sensors

These should be placed in sharps bins. Most people with diabetes will already have a sharps bin and a collection service established with their local authority (Council) for these. If you do not already have arrangements in place for collection of your sharps bin, please contact your local authority.

Sensor applicators

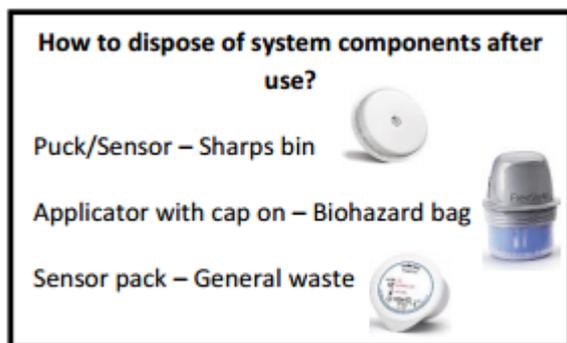
The clear lid should be screwed back onto the applicator, which should then be placed in a yellow biohazard/clinical waste bag or a sharps bin (Bromley). You will have been given a yellow biohazard/clinical waste bag by the specialist diabetes team.

Most London local authorities will collect the bags and replace with new ones. You will need to contact your local authority to arrange this. If your local authority does not provide replacement yellow biohazard/clinical waste bags, please contact your specialist diabetes team for further supplies.

For further information about arrangements in your local area, please see the South East London Flash Glucose safe disposal guidance.

Sensor pack

These should be placed in general household waste.



Access to sensors

Now I have been prescribed FreeStyle Libre® sensors on the NHS, will I always be prescribed them?

Six to nine months after you have started using FreeStyle Libre®, the specialist diabetes team will ask you to share your FreeStyle Libre® data with them and together you will review how you are getting on with it. The sensors will be continued on NHS prescriptions if you meet agreed targets after this review period. If you are unsure what your agreed target is, please discuss with the specialist diabetes team.

In addition, at every diabetes review, the specialist team will review the use of FreeStyle Libre® with you to make sure it is still suitable for you. FreeStyle Libre® will only be continued on the NHS if you meet your agreed targets for continuing and the device continues to support your overall diabetes care.

What if I have further questions on how to use Freestyle Libre®?

If you have any further questions about your Freestyle Libre® device, please follow the links below which will take you to tutorial videos which will guide you through use of FreeStyle® Libre step-by-step and answer additional questions:

<https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/help/tutorials.html>

<https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/help/faqs.html>

If you continue to have questions, please contact your specialist diabetes team who will be happy to support you and answer any further questions you may have.

References

- NHS England Flash Glucose Monitoring: National Arrangements for Funding of Relevant Diabetes Patients. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/flash-glucose-monitoring-national-arrangements-funding-v1.1.pdf> (last accessed 17.04.19)
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- NHS London Clinical Networks Implementation guidance accessed September 2018 at <http://www.londonscn.nhs.uk/networks/cardiovascular/diabetes/freestyle-libre/>
- NHS London Clinical Networks. Update on FreeStyle Libre® clinical waste disposal information. Accessed September 2018 at <http://www.londonscn.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/dia-Update-on-FreeStyle-Libre-clinical-waste-disposal-from-abbott-040618.pdf>
- Abbott 'How to use your FreeStyle Libre system: help and tutorials. Accessed September 2018 at <https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/help/tutorials.html>
- Abbott Training pack for healthcare professionals and patients – The FreeStyle Libre Flash Glucose Monitoring System. Healthcare Professional and Patient Training – London. Accessed September 2018 at <http://www.londonscn.nhs.uk/networks/cardiovascular/diabetes/freestyle-libre/>
- Communication with Abbott
- MHRA Medical device alert (MDA/2019/003) (29.01.19): FreeStyle Libre flash glucose sensor – Use of barrier methods to reduce skin reactions to the sensor adhesive. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/drug-device-alerts/freestyle-libre-flash-glucose-sensor-use-of-barrier-methods-to-reduce-skin-reactions-to-the-sensor-adhesive-mda-2019-003> (last accessed 17.04.19)

South East London Area Prescribing Committee. A partnership between NHS organisations in South East London: Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and GSTFT/KCH /SLAM/ Oxleas NHS Foundation Trusts/Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust