

Insulin and glucagon like peptide 1 (GLP-1) analogue preferred disposable pen needles for adults over 19 years of age - prescribing fact sheet

Aim: To implement cost effective prescribing of insulin and GLP-1 analogue disposable pen needles in agreement with individual patients aged >19 years.

Key Points

1. The costs of insulin and GLP-1 analogue disposable pen needles range between £5.35 to £13 for 100 (excluding safety needles). Changing to lower acquisition cost pen needles where clinically appropriate can release savings to reinvest in diabetes care
2. Individual patient circumstances and choice should be taken into account when deciding on the length of pen needle
3. The South East London Area prescribing Committee have recommended BD Viva pen needles and Tricare pen needles as the preferred pen needles for the majority of adults aged >19 years
4. All pen needles are for single use only. When prescribing pen needles, patients should be advised on safe disposal arrangements

Compatibility

The preferred pen needles are compatible with all UK available insulin pens and GLP-1 analogue pens. Of note, exenatide prolonged release (Bydureon®) and dulaglutide (Trulicity®) pens contain their own pen needles and do not require additional pen needles to be prescribed. Both of these pens need to be disposed of fully in a sharps bin and therefore it may be advisable to prescribe either a larger sharps bin (4 Litres or 7 Litres) or adequate supplies of smaller (1Litre) sharp bins.

Preferred disposable pen needles

Preferred pen needles	4mm	5mm	6mm	8mm
BD Viva pen needles (£3.64/90) Please prescribe in boxes of 90	32G	31G	31G	31G
Tricare pen needles (£3.95/100) Please prescribe in boxes of 100	32G	31G	31G	31G

Pen needle length

- Correct size of needle is essential to ensure insulin and/or GLP-1 analogues are injected into subcutaneous tissue rather than muscle in order to ensure predictable absorption. Injecting into muscle rather than subcutaneous tissue can:
 - Cause more rapid or unpredictable absorption causing variability in blood glucose levels and increased hypoglycaemia risk
 - Be more painful and may cause bleeding and bruising
- 4mm, 5mm and 6mm needles are suitable for all adults with diabetes, regardless of body mass index (BMI). Some patients may prefer to continue using 8mm needles
- Injection sites should be examined as part of an annual diabetes review and where injection problems are suspected or identified
- Each injection site should be examined individually and assessed to see if a lifted skin fold is required for all size needles. If patients are using pen needles ≥8mm, ensure a lifted skin fold is used to avoid intramuscular injections.
- Shorter needles (4mm or 5mm) are recommended in pregnancy to decrease the risk of intramuscular injections
- Offer needles of different lengths to adults who are having problems such as pain, local skin reactions and injection site leakages

Recommendations

1. Identify all patients currently prescribed disposable pen needles priced >£6/100 for insulin or GLP-1 analogue pens via an electronic search on the practice clinical system.

This guidance 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 guardian or carer.

2. Exclude patients:
 - a. Under the community nursing teams. ***In line with a European Union Council Directive 2010/32/EU Directive, safety needles will need to be prescribed as requested by the district nursing team***
 - b. Who require safety needles e.g for needle phobia. Refer to specialist diabetes team for assessment
 - c. Aged 19 years or younger
 - d. Who require 'click or twist' pen needles for dexterity issues
 - e. Who are prescribed exenatide prolonged release (Bydureon®) or dulaglutide (Trulicity®)
3. Review all remaining patients with a view to:
 - a. Changing to an alternative, more cost-effective pen needle where clinically appropriate and acceptable to the patient. Example patient letters are available [here](#). Patients should be changed to the same size needle that they have been previously using
 - b. Changing from pen needles greater than or equal to 12mm to shorter needles if patient is in agreement
4. For patients using insulin syringes with 12mm needles, consider changing to insulin syringes with shorter 8mm needles

Safe disposal

In order to ensure safe disposal of sharps please follow the relevant Council regulations for safe disposal of needles:

Bexley Council Regulations

1. Visit Bexley council website: <http://www.bexley.gov.uk/recycling>
2. On this page, there is a link for "sharps box collection" half way down this page, Householders need to register at the link to arrange collections. GP will prescribe sharps bins. If patient has no internet access, a paper form can be completed by the Healthcare professional (HCP) & posted or handed in at the Civic Offices.

Bromley Council Regulations

1. GP to complete form [click here](#) and submit for ongoing collection registration. [No fax/email accepted]
2. For ongoing collections the patient then calls 020 8461 7677
3. For a single collection patient can call 020 8461 7677

Croydon Council Regulations

1. GP practice to prescribe sharps bin for patient
2. To arrange collection patients can use following:
3. Go to [Council website](#)
4. Telephone: 020 8 726 6200 ext. 19521
5. Email ISCStreetsceneAdmin@croydon.gov.uk

Greenwich Council Regulations

1. GP practice prescribes first sharps bin for patient
2. HCP fills out Greenwich [Clinical Waste – Referral Form](#) and emails this to the council.
3. Council will contact patient to make arrangements for collection of waste and will deliver replacement bin.

Lambeth Council Regulations

1. GP practice to prescribe sharps bin for patient
2. When sharps bin is full, healthcare professional (HCP) to complete [healthcare waste referral](#) form for individual patients. Council will contact HCP for patient details and arrange collection with patient
3. GP practice to prescribe replacement sharps bin

Lewisham Council Regulations

1. HCP fills out Lewisham [council referral form](#)
2. Lewisham council posts a letter to the patient regarding the service and contact details for when bin gets full.
3. Patient can call or post a message on the Lewisham council website that they require their sharps bin to be collected.
4. HCP prescribes a new sharps bin for the patient

Southwark Council Regulations

1. GP practice to prescribe first sharps bin for patient
2. Note that as part of the waste management process, the GP, nurse or health visitor must complete and return a [clinical and healthcare waste collection application form](#) to the Council.
3. Once the Council has received the completed form, they will contact the patient to make collection arrangements. The Council will supply the patient with replacement sharps bins.

Wandsworth Council Regulations

Patients are advised to call 0208 871 8558 or visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk and search 'domestic clinical waste' for advice on local guidance

References: 1. Diabetes Care in the UK FIT UK Forum for Injection Technique UK (2015) [The UK Injection Technique Recommendations 3rd Edition](#). Retrieved 3.8.16 2. National Health Service Business Support Authority (2016) [Drug Tariff April 2016](#). Retrieved April 2016 and [Drug Tariff November 2017](#). Retrieved October 2017. 3. Patient information leaflet for Bydureon <http://www.medicines.org.uk> on 10 August 2016. 4. Patient information leaflet for Trulicity <http://www.medicines.org.uk> on 10 August 2016. 5. Information provided by Becton Dickinson and Owen Mumford June-July 2016. 6. Lambeth Council ['Get rid of healthcare waste' website](#): accessed November 2016. 7. Nice guideline 18. Type 1 diabetes in adults: diagnosis and management. 26 August 2015. 8. Diabetes Care in the UK FIT UK Forum for Injection Technique UK (2016) [The UK Injection Technique Recommendations 4th Edition](#) 9. Details of sharps disposal supplied by relevant Medicines Optimisation teams. 10. Patient letters adapted with permission from NHS Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group

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

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Date produced: June 2017, updated October 2017 Date for review: June 2019 or sooner if evidence/practice changes