

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How do I get FreeStyle Libre® sensors on the NHS?

In March 2019, NHS England issued guidance relating to national arrangements for funding of Flash Glucose Monitoring for relevant diabetes patients. As a result mid and south Essex CCGs have reviewed their [commissioning policy](#). If you are already under the care of the specialist diabetes team they will discuss your eligibility at your next routine review, and if you meet the criteria will receive FreeStyle Libre® funded by the NHS. If you are not under the care of the diabetes specialist team but you clearly meet the strict criteria you will need to ask to be referred to the specialist team for assessment, and you will be seen at the next available routine appointment.

2. Who is entitled to FreeStyle Libre® sensors on the NHS?

Under the national criteria only 20% of patients with Type 1 Diabetes are expected to meet the criteria for NHS funded FreeStyle Libre®. The national policy group understandably sought to prioritise patients who are in greatest need or whom there is the strongest evidence base. For example patient with pre-existing type 1 diabetes in pregnancy, patients with severe disabilities on insulin, and patients on insulin treatment on haemodialysis, are all key groups supported by the national policy. The aim is to be equitable and fair across the whole NHS.

NHS care of patients with Type 1 diabetes is already at a high standard. If you don't meet the criteria you will not be considered for FreeStyle Libre®, but the healthcare teams will of course continue to support you in all aspects of your diabetes care.

3. My review is not due for several months- can I request an earlier review by my specialist?

Only those patients, whose diabetes needs have significantly changed since their last review and clearly meet the strict criteria for NHS funded FreeStyle Libre® should ask for an earlier appointment. Our diabetes specialists have limited capacity and must prioritise those patients with higher clinical needs.

4. How do I request an earlier review if my diabetes needs have significantly changed?

If you are already under the care of the specialist diabetes team please contact them directly using the contact details provided by them. It is not necessary for your GP or practice diabetes nurse to make a referral. If you are not already under the care of the specialist team please contact your GP practice.

5. Can my GP prescribe these sensors before I have been seen by the specialist?

No- GPs are only allowed to prescribe these sensors once you have been assessed by the specialist as meeting the strict criteria for NHS funding. Your GP will receive a letter advising them to prescribe if you meet the criteria. Part of the reason for this is that patients obtain most benefit from using FreeStyle Libre® with the focussed educational support of specialist teams. The device itself is only as good as the educational support in how to interpret and act on the results it generates. The specialist team will also ensure that patients with type 1 diabetes who meet the criteria have already had, or complete, carbohydrate counting training.

6. Once I have been seen by the specialist, how soon will I get the FreeStyle Libre® system?

In order to use the system correctly all patients must attend a training session, at which you will be supplied with the scanner and initial supply of one sensor. This training session will usually take place within a month of your assessment, but may take longer due to higher demand for training places as use of FreeStyle Libre® is rolled out nationally.

7. Is there anything else I need to do?

You will be expected to use the system regularly to improve your diabetes management, upload data for central monitoring, participate in audits to assess outcomes and complete a diabetes structured education programme- if you have not already done so. A copy of the patient agreement forms can be found here: <https://www.thurrockccg.nhs.uk/about-us/document-library/policies-and-procedures-1/service-restriction-policy/freestyle-libre>

8. How many sensors will my GP prescribe for me?

A maximum of 6 months of sensors will initially be funded for each patient. One sensor together with the scanner will be provided by the specialist clinic. Up to a maximum of 6 further monthly (28 day) prescriptions for 2 sensors (12 in total) will be issued by your GP. Continuation after 6 months will be at the discretion of your specialist, and GPs will need to have confirmation from the specialist before they can continue to prescribe. You will be regularly reassessed to ensure you are deriving benefit from continued use of FreeStyle Libre® and your prescription may be stopped in the future following assessment by your specialist.

If any of the sensors are defective, you will need to contact the manufacturer to obtain a replacement. Your GP cannot issue prescriptions to replace defective sensors.

You should contact the Abbott Customer Careline, on 0800 170 1177, on the day that the FreeStyle Libre® sensor falls off or if closed when the office is next open. You will need to keep the displaced FreeStyle Libre® sensor and follow the instructions of the Abbott Customer Careline representative.

Please note that a maximum of 3 replacement FreeStyle Libre® sensors can be issued per individual.'

9. What happens if my sensor falls off and/or I run out of sensors?

You should return to monitoring your glucose levels using blood glucose testing strips, increasing the frequency of testing as necessary and as advised by your specialist to compensate for lack of sensor. You may have to request additional blood glucose testing strips from your GP if you have insufficient to last until your next routine prescription for your sensors/strips is due. Alternatively you may be able to purchase a sensor from your community pharmacy.

10. Will GPs continue to prescribe glucose testing strips for me if I meet the criteria for use of sensors

Yes- however it is anticipated that the use of these strips will be reduced to a lower level (maximum 3 pots per month). You may be asked to change to a more cost effective meter and strip if not already using one.

11. Can drivers use the Flash Glucose Sensors to monitor blood glucose levels prior to driving?

The DVLA has updated the guidance on glucose testing prior to driving which now permits the use of interstitial glucose readings e.g. using Flash Glucose Scanning (FreeStyle Libre®) and CGM systems **for group 1 drivers only**. [CLICK HERE FOR FULL INFORMATION](#) as finger prick tests are still required (even for group 1 drivers) under certain circumstances, such as any hypoglycaemic events, suspected hypoglycaemic events or mismatches between the Libre results and the blood glucose results.

All pre-existing DVLA requirements and responsibilities for safe driving still lie with the patients. The DVLA must be informed by any patient if there is any significant change in their driving status in accordance with these national DVLA guidelines.

12. What if I am already self-funding FreeStyle Libre®?

If you have been buying the FreeStyle Libre® directly from the manufacturer (and wish to continue using the device) you should still purchase your sensors via this route until you are reviewed, if appropriate, by the Specialist Diabetes Team at your next routine clinic appointment. M&SECCGs will only fund FreeStyle Libre® for patients who fulfill the eligibility criteria as written in the [VBCP](#). It is important that you understand that your review will not be based on what has already been purchased, but on what has been agreed for national NHS funding.

13. What if I want to use (or continue using) FreeStyle Libre® but do not meet the criteria for funding?

You can buy FreeStyle Libre® directly from the manufacturer - <https://www.FreeStylelibre.co.uk/libre/> or Tel:0800170 1177.

14. How does the new system fit in with ongoing developments in Type 1 Diabetes?

There have been robust improvements in type 1 diabetes care steadily implemented throughout the history of the National Health Service. These have included a wide range of innovative insulin and blood monitoring products, retinal screening program, dedicated paediatric and obstetric services, skilled trained specialists working across all health sectors, and a wide range of educational support programs. Mid and south Essex CCGs remain absolutely committed to supporting all diabetes patients as new approved technologies and national guidelines are developed.

15. Will the recommendations for funding be reviewed?

Yes, these recommendations will be kept under review. In particular, a further review will be undertaken when national funding of the device and sensors ceases in March 2021.

16. If patients have any additional questions, who should they be directed to?

Please contact the Medicines Management team on – 01375 365810 or Email – thurrock.ccg@nhs.net