

# FreeStyle Libre® primary care information sheet

## What is FreeStyle Libre®?

The FreeStyle Libre® flash glucose monitoring system is a device for the self-monitoring of glucose levels. Unlike traditional finger-prick devices (that measure the glucose level in the blood), Libre® measures the glucose level in the interstitial fluid, via a sensor that sits just under the skin. It updates readings every minute and stores data every 15 minutes giving a near-continuous record of measurements which can be accessed on demand. FreeStyle Libre does not provide real-time continuous glucose monitoring or a hypoglycaemia alarm. FreeStyle Libre® is licensed for adults and children above the age of 4.

## Is this a replacement for fingerpick blood glucose testing?

As Libre® measures interstitial glucose, it is not a complete substitute for blood glucose testing. Blood glucose measurements are required in certain circumstances, including:

- during times of rapidly changing glucose levels e.g. exercise,
- when scanned glucose results do not correspond with the user's symptoms, e.g. patient feels hypoglycaemic but the FreeStyle Libre® reader is showing a higher glucose reading
- where the reader indicates a low glucose reading,
- to meet Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency requirements,
- to use bolus calculators.

Patients will continue to require prescriptions for blood glucose testing strips on prescription for the situations highlighted above; the expected amount will be detailed on the initiation documentation/clinic letter. Please note that if FreeStyle Libre® has been prescribed for users of high numbers of test strips, it is expected that number will fall over the first few months.

## How is the FreeStyle Libre® sensor applied on the body?

The FreeStyle Libre sensor is applied to the back of the upper arm with a disposable applicator. When the sensor is applied, a 5mm sterile filament is inserted just under the skin, and held in place with a small adhesive pad. The sensor lasts for up to 14 days.

## How does a patient get a reading?

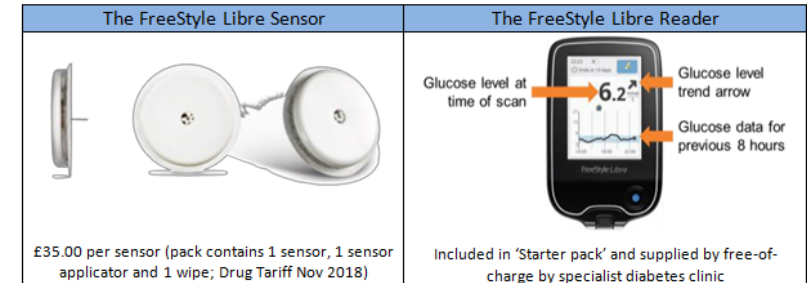
The patient swipes the reader over the sensor to get a glucose reading. It can provide a near-continuous record. With a scan of the reader over the sensor, patients can see their current glucose reading, their 8-hour glucose history and a trend arrow showing the direction and rate of change of their glucose levels. Patients can scan as often as they want, even through clothing if they want the near continuous record they would need to scan every 8 hours.

## What do continuing prescribers need to do?

All patients undergo a 3-6 month trial period before an assessment of long-term continuation by the specialist diabetes team is made. Specialists are responsible for the first 2 months' supply and will request for GPs to continue the trial period after the first patient assessment (it is recommended Freestyle Libre is added to the patient's acute prescription during this time). At 3-6 months, specialists will undertake an assessment of long-term continuation with the outcome clearly communicated to GPs. Patients will continue to be reviewed by the specialist diabetes team at least annually. GPs should review the number of finger-prick test strips available on repeat in line with recommendations from the diabetes specialist and/or after discussion with their patient.

Sensors last 14 days and therefore patients need two per month. Sensors that fall off/malfunction should not be replaced on prescription – Abbott should be contacted directly by the patient and they will send out a replacement (Tel: 0800 170 1177). Where sensors repeatedly fall off, the patient should be referred back to the Specialist for review. If the reader develops faults, the patient should report this directly to Abbott. Sensors should be disposed in a sharps bin; applicators with cap on disposed in a biohazard bag and the sensor pack disposed in general waste. If the patient has any issues with the device or requires further guidance, please do refer them back to the initiating team (details will be on the initiation paperwork). Libre compatible test strips are not recommended (see [NCL guidance on test strips](#)).

Transfer of prescribing will be accompanied by clear monitoring responsibilities and information on ongoing review; responsibilities for specialists, patients and GPs are outlined in the [Position Statement](#).



Patient swiping over the sensor to take a reading



## Where can I get more information?

Short video tutorials on how to set up the device and apply the sensor can be found by clicking on the following link <https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/help/tutorials.html>  
More in-depth training materials and the full **North Central London implementation guidance** can be found by clicking on the following link [https://www.ncl-mon.nhs.uk/faqs/flash\\_glucose\\_monitoring/](https://www.ncl-mon.nhs.uk/faqs/flash_glucose_monitoring/)