

Home blood glucose testing

Patient information leaflet



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 **01726 627800**

Why has my GP practice / diabetic nurse changed my blood glucose meter?

Local diabetes specialist teams in Devon and Cornwall have agreed certain meter choices for reasons of consistency and cost. As a result of these agreements, there are local guidelines outlining which meters and strips should be available to people depending on testing needs.

When should I test my own blood glucose level?

Some diabetic patients are advised to carry out self monitoring of blood glucose, as shown opposite.

Patients who drive must follow DVLA guidelines on testing. For up to date advice, go to www.gov.uk/diabetes-driving

What is an OK level?

Blood glucose levels are ideally between 4 and 7mmols before meals, and between 7 and 10mmols after meals. If your test results are frequently outside this range, seek advice from one of your health care professionals.



Individual target levels will be set for you when you are taught how to test your own blood sugar. The important thing is knowing what to do with the results, rather than doing lots of tests.

What if I am ill?

When you are ill, your glucose levels can vary a lot, even if you usually have steady control of your diabetes. For this reason, it can be important to test your blood glucose levels more often when you are unwell.

Driving with diabetes

Some people living with diabetes are required to check their blood glucose levels before they drive and during breaks in driving. These drivers have to check their glucose levels no more than two hours before driving and then again on a break after every two hours of driving.

Car and motorcycle drivers who use insulin and flash or continuous glucose monitoring devices may now use these devices to take glucose readings before driving and during breaks. Requirements for glucose testing for bus and lorry drivers remain the same (finger prick blood reading).

If using flash or continuous glucose monitoring, drivers must still confirm their blood glucose level with a finger prick test if:

- Their glucose level is 4.0 mmol/L or below.
- They experience symptoms of hypoglycaemia.
- The glucose monitoring system gives a reading that is not consistent with the symptoms they are experiencing.

How is diabetes best monitored?

When you have a diabetes checkup, a blood sample for HbA1c test is taken. This is part of measuring how well you are controlling your diabetes and gives information on your blood glucose levels over the past six to eight weeks.

Your target blood glucose levels will be set by your doctor or nurse but generally recommendations are for levels consistently between 4 mmols and 10 mmols.

This test shows how well your diabetes is being managed, and for some people this is all that is needed to monitor their diabetes. Your doctor will usually test this once or twice a year.



Need more advice?

If you're concerned, seek advice from your GP, practice nurse or diabetes specialist nurse.

Patient and treatment	Self monitoring blood glucose management	Monthly supply
Type 1 – insulin	Test 4 to 10 times daily*.	Up to 6 packs of 50 strips may be required**.
Type 2 – insulin	May need to test once or twice daily*.	1 or 2 packs of 50 strips**
Type 2 – managed by tablets carrying a risk of hypoglycaemia inc. sulphonylureas and glinides	May need to test once or twice weekly*	Nil to 1 pack of 50 strips**
Type 2 - managed by diet alone or other medication and non-insulin injectables, (excluding sulphonylureas and glinides)	Not routinely required	
People who use flash or continuous glucose monitoring will also require a supply of blood glucose test strips.		

* Drivers may need to undertake additional testing in line with guidelines

** Additional packs may be required by drivers

This leaflet has been developed by NHS Kernow's Medicines Optimisation team via the diabetes work stream

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