

How can I access  
flash glucose  
monitoring if I need it?

## Support pack

This pack will help you to find out more about  
flash and how you can access it.

Reviewed March 2019

## Introduction

### Following several major campaign victories, Flash Glucose Monitoring (Flash GM) should now be available on prescription across the United Kingdom.

Flash GM is a new exciting and innovative technology that is potentially life changing for many people with diabetes.

From April 2019, updated NHS England guidelines mean that thousands more people in the UK will be able to access Flash GM on prescription, regardless of where they live.

**This pack will help you to find out more about Flash GM and decide if it would be right for you. It will help you to make your individual case for why you would benefit from using Flash GM.**

## What is Flash GM?

**Flash GM uses a small sensor that you wear on your skin. It measures the amount of glucose (sugar) in the fluid that surrounds your body cells.**



It measures these levels continuously and you can access them by scanning the sensor with a reader whenever you want to. The system can also show any trends in your levels using an arrow that tells you which direction your glucose level is heading. The sensor will need to be replaced with a new one about every 14 days.

There are similarities between Flash GM and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM), but whilst CGM monitors your glucose levels and sends data to your display device continuously,

Flash GM only tells you your readings and trends when you scan the sensor. This means that it cannot alert you if you're having hypoglycaemia (a hypo) through an alarm like CGM devices do.

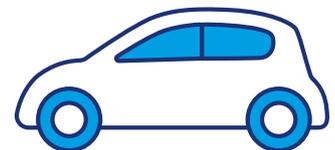
Flash GM replaces routine blood glucose monitoring but you will still need to perform a blood test when your glucose is rising or falling fast, or if your symptoms don't match your reading.

[You can read more about Flash GM here.](#)

## Flash GM and driving

New guidelines mean that you can use Flash GM to check your glucose levels when driving, but you must confirm your levels with a finger prick test if:

- your glucose level is 4.0 mmol/L or below
- you experience symptoms of a hypo
- the glucose monitoring system gives a reading that is not consistent with the symptoms you are experiencing – for example, if you feel the symptoms of a hypo but the reading does not indicate this.



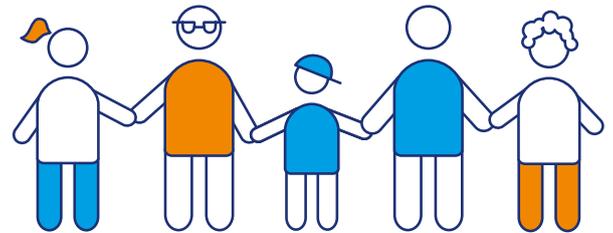
## What we think about Flash GM

**We believe everyone with diabetes should have access to the right technology to support them, not just those who can afford it.**

That's why we campaigned with you, to fight for Flash GM to be provided free on the NHS. And together, we made change happen.

## Who is Flash GM for?

**We brought together a group of experts to look at this question. We took into account the scientific and clinical evidence available and the experiences of those using Flash GM to determine who it will benefit and is appropriate for.**



We've made this into a guideline which can be found on our Flash GM web page [here](#).

Our recommendation is that Flash GM is suitable for adults and children who use insulin to manage their diabetes, principally those with Type 1 diabetes using multiple daily injections or an insulin pump. It would also be suitable for patients with other types of diabetes when intensive insulin therapy becomes necessary because of severely reduced pancreatic function.

Flash GM may also be suitable for people with highly variable blood glucose levels, hospital inpatients who need regular monitoring and people with diabetes who have learning difficulties or have a fear of needles.

Using Flash GM may benefit people in certain jobs where finger-prick testing is not always practical and they struggle to test regularly.

People with diabetes have reported how Flash GM supports them to carry on with their daily lives, sports, work, performances, and exercise with greater ease and confidence.

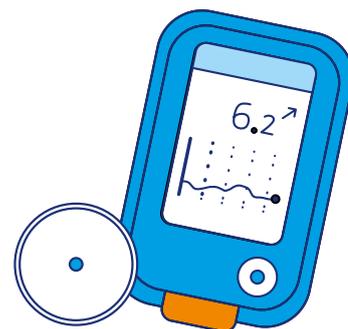
We recommend that Flash GM is not suitable for those who have completely lost their hypo awareness. This is CGM, which has an alarm function, is more appropriate for you if you're not able to recognise when your glucose levels are dangerously low.

There is currently no NICE guidance on who is suitable for Flash GM, but NICE have produced a technology briefing which reviews current evidence with comments from clinical experts, which you can access [here](#).

## What are the potential benefits to using Flash GM?

**Flash GM has a number of benefits that can improve people's diabetes clinical outcomes over and above glucose testing. It provides data to support someone's self-management of their condition and can improve their quality of life. It can:**

- Provide freedom to test more frequently, reducing the need for painful, stressful and inconvenient finger prick glucose monitoring.
- Reduce costs associated with glucose test strips.
- Give more confidence in managing your diabetes as you have more data to base decisions on.
- Prevent false high readings resulting from performing a blood test using unwashed hands.
- Let you see trends: when your blood sugar levels are starting to rise or drop, so you can take action earlier.
- Let you see what your levels are like at times when you don't normally test such as during the night – either by looking at your own data or by someone scanning your sensor for you while you're asleep.
- Enable you to improve your HbA1c and reduce fluctuation in blood glucose levels. This can help to prevent future health complications. In turn this would save the NHS the cost of treating those complications and provide better health outcomes.
- Suit those doing a high amount of intense physical exercise.
- Improve general quality of life and benefit people in the workplace.
- Suit those who suffer with anxiety or have needle phobia.



## How do I make my case for Flash GM?

1

**If you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, Flash is available using national criteria.**

You can find the criteria using the buttons below.

[England](#)

[Northern Ireland](#)

[Wales](#)

In Scotland, Flash GM is decided upon by local decision makers, but is available in almost all areas. You will need to refer to your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) guidelines.

2

### **Check the criteria and see whether or not you are eligible.**

You can speak to your healthcare team if you are unsure if you meet the criteria.

3

### **If you don't meet the criteria you will need to make your individual case for why you think you would benefit from using Flash GM.**

When making your case to your health professional, you will need to explain how and why using Flash GM will help you to look after your diabetes.

4

### **If you are still having issues accessing Flash after speaking to your healthcare professional, you can also write or email your CCG, Health Trust or Health Board outlining why you should be provided with Flash GM.**

You could think about what your answer to these three questions would be and write them down. Try to be as clear and concise as you can.

#### **Have you been self-funding Flash GM? If you have then what did you notice about your diabetes management before, during and after using the device?**

- You could compare your HbA1c results for when you have and have not been using Flash GM.

#### **What are the challenges you're currently facing with your diabetes management?**

- How do you think using Flash GM would help you with your blood glucose control?
- Do you test as often as you have been advised or would like to?
- Do you experience regular hypos and what are the effects of this on your day-to-day life?

#### **What about your lifestyle makes it hard to monitor your diabetes without Flash GM?**

- Do you struggle to perform finger prick tests regularly as part of your everyday routine?
- Do you work in an environment where it is difficult to perform finger prick tests regularly? For example, are you a car mechanic or builder who has dirty hands and struggles to get them clean? Or a teacher, shop worker or healthcare professional who finds performing finger prick tests challenging over the course of the day?
- Do you play sport and how would Flash GM benefit you?

## Other useful information to help you make your case



**Guidance has been produced by the Association of British Clinical Diabetologists to support people in trying to access Flash GM, including a letter to all diabetes teams and information to help make a case for Flash GM.**

You could draw attention to this guidance if your decision maker or local diabetes team is not aware it exists.

Click **here** for more information.

## Diabetes Education Courses



**If you are considering using Flash GM, you could benefit from going on a diabetes education course, as recommended by NICE.**

When using Flash GM, it's essential that you have the knowledge needed to make sure that you can use the information the system provides to improve management of your glucose levels. Even people who have been living with diabetes for 20 or more years tell us how life changing these educational courses can be.

You can ask your GP to refer you to a diabetes education programme. You can find more information about education courses on our website **here**.

## Flash GM training



**Abbott, who supply the Freestyle Libre, provide free online learning for both healthcare professionals and people with diabetes using the technology.**

There are nine 'bite-size' modules in total, which will introduce you to the system, and help you get the most out of your data to manage your diabetes.

You can visit their website **here**.

## What can I do if I'm unhappy with the response I receive?

**If you are not satisfied with the response you receive about getting access to Flash GM, you have the right to complain and to have your complaint investigated.**

Anyone who provides care on the NHS must have a complaints procedure. They must publicise their procedure and give clear information about how to make a complaint. Ask a member of staff for details, look on the surgery, hospital board, a CCG's website or contact their complaints department for a copy of the complaints procedure.

You can look at our support pack on making a complaint about healthcare **here** for more information on the Health Board or NHS complaints procedure.



**You may then, following making a complaint, also like to raise the issue with your local political representative, your MP, MSP, AM or MLA. Click the button below to find your local political representative.**

[England](#)

[Northern Ireland](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Wales](#)

## What else are Diabetes UK doing?

**We want to ensure that everyone who could benefit from using Flash GM has access to this potentially life changing technology.**

We will continue to monitor the roll out of Flash and provide support to people living with diabetes as they seek to access it.

If you're having trouble accessing Flash GM on prescription you can notify us on [campaigns@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@diabetes.org.uk) or call our helpline on **0345 123 2399**.



## How else can we help you?

### Call our helpline

Our helpline is staffed by trained counsellors who really know diabetes. They can help you with information about diabetes, take the time to talk things through and explore any emotional, social, psychological or practical difficulties. For more information and support about your rights and how to get on a diabetes education course they're the people to call.



**0345 123 2399**

Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm

**helpline@diabetes.org.uk**

**www.diabetes.org.uk/helpline**

If you're in Scotland

**0141 212 8710**

Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm.

**helpline.scotland@diabetes.org.uk**

### Join our online communities

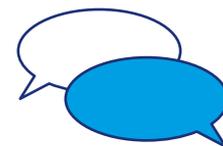
Our online Support Forum and Facebook and Twitter communities are a great place to meet other people with diabetes. Morning, noon and night you'll find loads of people sharing their experiences, offering each other support and providing plenty of advice about life with diabetes.



**forum.diabetes.org.uk**

### Join a local support group

The members of our 380 support groups up and down the UK have been there, done that and got the Diabetes UK t-shirt. They normally meet once a month to share experiences, offer support and learn more about diabetes. Find your local group on our website.



**www.diabetes.org.uk/groups**

**0345 123 2399**

### Learning Zone

Learning Zone gives tailor-made advice on how to live well with diabetes. It's a new way to understand your condition better, combining clinical knowledge with the experiences of other people living with diabetes.



**www.diabetes.org.uk/learningzone**

### Type 1 Events

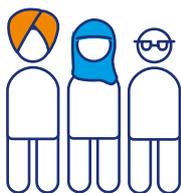
Our events for children, teenagers, adults and families have run for over 80 years and are designed to make sure diabetes holds no one back. The events are about sharing experiences, building confidence and creating more freedom to live with diabetes.



**www.diabetes.org.uk/type-1-events**

## Join Diabetes Voices

Diabetes Voices are members of the public who campaign with us to improvements in diabetes services and care across the UK. If you would like to become a Diabetes Voice, or for more information, get in touch.



[www.diabetes.org.uk/voices](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/voices)

[diabetesvoices@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:diabetesvoices@diabetes.org.uk)

0345 123 2399

## For help making a complaint

If you're unhappy with any of the care you've received we've got all the information and advice you'll need on our website in our Making a complaint about healthcare support pack.



[www.diabetes.org.uk/advocacy](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/advocacy)

0345 123 2399

## Find out more on our website

We've got loads of free information, advice, tips and guides on our website to help you live well with diabetes. If you prefer you can also order printed magazines and information leaflets from our online shop.



[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

[shop.diabetes.org.uk](http://shop.diabetes.org.uk)

0345 123 2399

## INPUT



INPUT are a charity that supports access to diabetes technology. You can contact them through their website:

[www.inputdiabetes.org.uk](http://www.inputdiabetes.org.uk)

[info@inputdiabetes.org.uk](mailto:info@inputdiabetes.org.uk)

## JDRF



JDRF funds Type 1 diabetes research to improve lives and one day eradicate the condition for good.

[www.jdrf.org.uk](http://www.jdrf.org.uk)

[info@jdrf.org.uk](mailto:info@jdrf.org.uk)

020 7713 2030

