

Can I get access to Flash? The situation in Northern Ireland:

Northern Ireland have been prescribing Flash since March 2018.

You can find the full criteria here:

http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/pharmacy_and_medicines_management/correspondence/Pathway-for-the-Managed-Access-of-FreeStyle-Libre.docx

In Northern Ireland, as with everywhere else, you **must** have undergone (or willing to undertake) previous 'advanced insulin self-management education' e.g. DAFNE, BERTIE, CHOICE.

The criteria also specifically say Flash on prescription is only for people living with type 1 diabetes. This is also only to qualify for a 3-6month trial after which improvements in management will be reviewed and a decision will be made on whether prescriptions can then be made on an annual basis.

What's the criteria in Northern Ireland?:

The criteria in Northern Ireland is fairly broad. In addition to the training and being type 1, the criteria say there are additional points 'to consider' in prescribing Flash. Therefore, there is no strict policy, but rather a variety of things your consultant must take in to account.

Regular testing:

- If you test over four times a day, can show how you effectively count your carbs and manage your injections this will be taken into account when prescribing Flash.

Regular and unpredictable hypos:

- If you find it tough to control your blood sugar levels which results in regular hypos – over 3 episodes a week, or 2 severe episodes a year, or if you have a loss of hypo awareness, you may also qualify for Flash

Consistently high HbA1c:

- If you find it difficult to keep your HbA1c levels down and it's reasonable to believe Flash would help you, then you may qualify for Flash in Northern Ireland

Barriers to managing your diabetes:

- There is also broader points you could qualify through in Northern Ireland if there are severe physical, psychological or occupational barriers to your ability to manage your sugar levels.

Currently using Flash:

- If you are currently using Flash and if there is substantial evidence of benefit in maintaining good glucose control with a sensor device, then you may also qualify.

Will these criteria change?:

Northern Ireland is leading the way in prescribing Flash to people living with type 1 diabetes. We hope that the evidence showing how Flash improves people's ability to manage their diabetes will convince NHS decision makers in Northern Ireland to broaden the criteria in the future.

What happens if you don't meet the criteria or are refused access?

If you are not able to get Flash GM on prescription now, or after April, it can also be bought directly from the manufacturer. A starter pack for the Freestyle Libre (one read and two sensors) cost around £170, and further sensors are about £60 each.

Some pharmacies and shops also sell the Freestyle Libre over the counter at varying prices. There are some restrictions on self-funding Flash – with a limit to the number of sensors you can buy at once. It is also still only available for existing customers. We are working with Abbott to increase access to Flash privately.

You can also advocate for access to Flash – we have created an [advocacy pack](#) you can find which gives pointers about what things to highlight when making your case for Flash with your diabetes team.

