

Prescribing...

- ✚ The Formulary and Prescribing Panel, working with the Specialist Diabetes Service agreed guidelines on the prescribing of test strips for people with diabetes.
- ✚ All patients with Type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) on insulin require monitoring with the frequency depending on the regimen recommended.
- ✚ A list of "preferred strips" has been agreed and in the coming year patients will be reviewed switched by doctors to better value products.

Background

In view of the escalating demand for high-tech specialist drugs and the demographic changes, commissioners everywhere have no option but to disinvest in areas where there is less value. This work is being done across the UK and has been widely reported in the media. In Jersey many of the products of concern, melatonin, lidocaine plasters and test strips are not available on prescription in the community at all.

The very high cost and low value products liothyronine, alimemazine and trimipramine are being removed from the local Prescribing List in May 2019 and products such as melatonin and lidocaine plasters have already been restricted.

Self-monitoring of blood glucose is an area where there is a perception that the high cost may not be justified. There is anecdotal evidence that NHS patients in England may be selling strips on internet auction sites to patients in countries where they are not funded at all e.g Switzerland.

Locally there were 3,150 prescriptions dispensed at a total net ingredient cost of £96,116 in the first half of 2018. It is not clear from the prescribing data what proportion are for patients with T1DM and what proportion are for T2DM. Guidelines on the prescribing of test strips for people with Type 2 DM were published recently and now guidelines for Type 1 DM have been produced.

What is the advice ?

Self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) is imperative for people with Type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) on insulin. Blood or urine testing for ketones may also be required. The device, the regime and the frequency of testing will all be on the advice of Secondary Care for the individual patient.

A wider range of test strips is required than for people with T2DM. The recommended strips are as follows

Test strips in T1 Diabetes Mellitus Jan/ Feb2019

1. **Glucomen Aero** and **FreeStyle Optium** are the preferred strips for most people with T1DM.
2. The following strips are required for T1DM patients including users of Freestyle Libre, Omnipod, CGM, Medtronic Insulin Pumps and for the blood testing for ketones.

Device	Strips	Cost
Freestyle Optium Neo	Freestyle Optium blood glucose test strips	£16.11
Freestyle Optium Neo	Freestyle Optium beta-ketone test strips	£21.71
Glucomen Aero 2K	Glucomen Aero Sensor Strips	£9.95
Glucomen Aero 2K	Glucomen Aero beta-ketone strips	£9.92
Freestyle Libre	Freestyle Optium blood glucose test strips	£16.12
Omnipod	Freestyle Optium blood glucose test strips	£16.12
Medtronic Pump	Contour Next Strips	£15.16
CGM	Contour Next strips	£15.16

Ref : Drug Tariff December 2018

The guidelines recommend that the quantity prescribed should be the quantity used each month.

People with T1DM will all be under the care of the Specialist Diabetes Secondary Care Services and will be provided with an appropriate free meter. Therefore there should be no need for a T1DM patient to buy a new meter if a non-preferred system is being used at present.

How will this work in practice?

- This is a major piece of work which will take some time to implement.
- Doctors in the Bailiwick are being written to requesting a review of all patients prescribed test strips.
- Appropriate messages will be put on Scriptswitch.
- The Diabetes Medical and Nursing Specialists can be contacted for advice at any time.
- Because of the large numbers of patients involved, preparing and checking these letters may take some time.
- Patients on strips that are not recommended will have the option of being referred to secondary care to obtain a free "preferred" meter, patients may choose to buy one and some practices have been given free supplies of the preferred meters.
- In time, the intention is that the White List will be amended so that only the best value strips will be reimbursable.

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