

## Implementation of the North of Tyne APC Blood Glucose Testing Strip Guidance across North Cumbria 2019

### Summary of changes

Adopted North of Tyne guidance approved by the North Cumbria Medicines Optimisation Committee promotes the use of Finetest Lite blood glucose testing machines and meters- produced by Neon Diagnostics. This covers people with all types of diabetes. <http://www.northoftyneapc.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/10/Blood-glucose-monitoring-guideline-July-18-update-v4.pdf>

The Neon Diagnostics rep, Barnabas Burai, will facilitate support to practices to implement this guidance and can be contacted on Mobile 07860 265647 or via email:

[Barnabas@neondiagnosics.com](mailto:Barnabas@neondiagnosics.com) **Freephone Helpline 0800 009 3378**

### **Important note:**

- The decision to change meters should be used as an opportunity to review the purpose of testing and the interpretation of results
- Blood glucose testing should be used as part of a care plan for the management of Diabetes following structured patient education which includes the purpose of testing. Testing is not required for all diabetic patients.

**1. Ensure all staff involved in the management of diabetic patients in the practice are aware of the new guidance.**

**2. Ensure all staff that meet with diabetic patients, and will be involved in implementing this guidance, are trained on how to use the new meters.** Neon Diagnostics can offer training to staff on the new meters and test strips. More information on the meter and test strips can be found on their website: [www.neondiagnosics.co.uk](http://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk)

**3. The practice should ensure they have sufficient supply of the meters. The meters contain 10 lancets and test strips in the starter pack,** to allow staff to familiarise themselves with the products, but further supplies will be needed prior to the implementation. These can be obtained free of charge from Neon Diagnostics, the customer care helpline is 01376 500 720 or via <http://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk/order.html> or **01376 500 720**. Ordering details are as below. The company endeavour to deliver to the practice at the earliest opportunity.

Finetest Lite Test Strips	-	pip code 399 - 4027
ELEMENT Test Strips	-	pip code 367-5394
GLUCOLAB Test Strips	-	pip code 367-5410

**4. Ensure the Finetest Lite Meters are the first available meters for selection by GPs and nursing staff in the practice.** This could be as simple as re-arranging the storage to place non-first line meters on the top shelf. It may be necessary to contact other pharmaceutical companies to amend existing supply arrangements for blood glucose testing meters. If there is an existing arrangement with an alternative [non-first line] meter supplier ensure this is cancelled and return any excess stock that is subsequently delivered to the practice. This will avoid these meters being used on an ongoing basis.

**5. Ensure local pharmacies are aware of the new guidance.** The LPC should be aware of this new guidance via their MOC membership however in order to make the transition as smooth as possible it would be beneficial if practices all make a courtesy phone call to their local

pharmacies to ensure they are aware of this and have the opportunity to order in sufficient supply of the new test strips.

6. **The practice should decide how they are going to implement this guidance and the best method of ensuring full patient engagement:** 'Ad-hoc' during the annual diabetes review or additional appointments to allow informed discussion with appropriate patients in advance of their routine review or a combination of the two processes.
7. **The practice should decide which patients may be suitable for discussion about a potential change to the new meter.** Search the clinical system for patients who have a repeat prescription for blood glucose testing strips and exclude those already prescribed Finetest Lite.

Exclusion criteria for changing to the new test strips would be:

- visual impairment
- impaired manual dexterity
- requirement for data analysis on meter
- Bus/taxi drivers on insulin/sulphonylureas who may have a requirement to dispose of sharps safely whilst working; use standard meter at home should be discussed.
- requirement for bolus dose advice on meter
- requirement for blood ketone monitoring
- patients on insulin pumps
- patients who are pregnant /trying to conceive may need their meter choice guided by hospital to ensure compatibility with service software
- patients being remotely managed via Telehealth
- any patients for whom the GP practice has received instructions from secondary care to keep the patient on a specific meter with rationale
- children, less than 16 years old, are usually excluded – seek advice from paediatric specialist prior to changing meters

Note: there may be other indications, as this is not an exhaustive list

This list of patients should be reviewed by the GP lead and/or practice nurse to identify patients who may be safely changed to the new low cost blood glucose test strips.

**8. Decide on the most appropriate method to communicate these changes to patients.**

Neon Diagnostics have offered to send out letters (with postage paid) to patients individually tailored for each practice and also can run education support sessions in practices to demonstrate the new test strips and meters. There is a sample patient letter included in this brief and this can be adapted as you wish.

If the practice is choosing to discuss these changes at the annual diabetes review it may be useful to amend the template to prompt the person carrying out the review to have a conversation about the role of testing and the possibility of changing to the new meter.

- 9. Make sure the necessary changes are made to the patient record-** ensure the previous test strips are removed and the new ones added. Ensure quantities are appropriate given the frequency of testing. See North of Tyne & Gateshead Blood Glucose Monitoring Guideline on the typical testing frequencies. Note that the test strips come in 2 pots of 25 strips with a 6 month expiry once opened. If usage is less than 25 test strips in a 6 month period a review of blood glucose monitoring and the function it is serving is recommended. This should be done with the patient.

- 10. Ensure patients are aware on how to obtain more supplies of non-prescribable items, including:** Replacement batteries; USB Cables; Meter replacement etc.

## FAQS for changing first line blood glucose test meters/strips

- 1. Does the prescription for the lancets need to be changed as well?** This is not essential, however the starter kits contain 'GreenLan' lancets which are competitively priced at £3.00 for 100 or £6.00 for 200 (correct as of July 2017) and there is an assumption that these will be first line for the majority of patients. Patients may prefer to continue using their existing lancets and device to obtain a sample for use with the new test strips and if they express a preference this should be considered, bearing in mind the relative prices of each product. If the practice wish to order additional supplies of lancets as part of the implementation process the ordering codes are as below:

GREENLAN Lancets (100)	-	pip code 367-5436
GREENLAN Lancets (200)	-	pip code 367-5428

- 2. Is secondary care aware of this work?** Yes, they are and will also be using Finetest Lite as the first line meter in the majority of patients. It is recognised that they often have a more complex patient mix and therefore they may meet the above exception criteria more frequently than primary care. The guideline was developed in conjunction with the diabetes lead nurses from the acute trusts, and has been approved through the Area Prescribing Committee. Representatives from the CCG were also invited to comment on the guidance during the process.
- 3. Is this all about saving money?** Yes and we don't apologise for that. The potential saving for North Cumbria is approximately £500,000 a year which, if released, can be reinvested in patient care. Although it is recognised that not all patients will be suitable for changing, the majority will be and therefore the savings available are significant.
- 4. One of our patients has just got a prescription for a 3 month supply of their existing test strips, if they change their meter at a review appointment this could mean all these test strips are wasted.** All patients should be instructed to use any existing supplies before beginning to use the new test strips and meters.

## Practice Checklist for Blood Glucose Monitoring Guidance Implementation

- Has a copy of the new blood glucose monitoring guidance been made available for all prescribers?
- Are all staff involved in counselling patients on the changes appropriately trained on using the new meters and test strips?
- Is there sufficient supply of the new meters in stock at the practice?
- Is there sufficient supply of leaflets about the new meters and test strips available to give all patients who change meters?
- Have steps been taken to make selection of the Finetest Lite meters as easy as possible?
- Has the practice decided to use any of the implementation tools on offer by Neon Diagnostics? Has this been organised and confirmed in time for the start of the implementation?
- If the potential change is being carried out during the annual diabetic review has the template been amended to prompt the reviewer on this?
- Has the practice agreed on method of communicating the proposed changes to patients?
- Have local pharmacies been informed of the planned work?
- Has the practice decided on the preferred method to implement the guidance? Ad-hoc, additional appointments or a combination.
- Has a list of potential suitable patients been reviewed by a GP/practice nurse?

**Sample Patient Letter – can be amended as required by the individual practice**

Prescriber's name  
Surgery Name  
Street Name  
Town  
Postcode  
Contact tel number

Patient Name  
House number and street name  
Town  
Postcode  
NHS Number: Patient Number:  
DOB:  
Dear <patient name>

**Re: Diabetes Review**

As a practice we are committed to ensuring that all of our patients are receiving the best possible care and that we are prescribing effectively and cost-efficiently.

We are currently reviewing patients who are monitoring their blood glucose (sugar) levels, using a blood glucose meter and test strips as part of their diabetes management.

We wish to discuss the role of monitoring within your care plan and discuss with you the possibility of changing your meter to a newer model. The new meter meets the most recent quality standards and also uses test strips which also meet these standards and are priced below most of the current products. Most of the test strips used by our patients cost around £10 per pack – which is more than many diabetes medicines cost per month! Across the whole of England this adds up to around £180 million each year.

This new meter uses test strips costing less than £6 per pack whilst meeting all the required quality standards – this is much better value for the NHS.

Numerous diabetes specialists have assessed the meters and recommend that they are suitable for the majority of people who need to test their blood glucose.

We invite you to attend an appointment to discuss the role of testing in your care and to give you the opportunity to try out the new meter. The meter is pre-set and ready for immediate testing. It is accurate and convenient to use and comes with an easy to follow operation manual. We will provide training on its use to make sure there are no problems and will also change your prescriptions to the correct lancet and testing strips if that is appropriate.

Your appointment has been arranged for ..... Please contact the surgery to rearrange this if it is not suitable

**Or**

Please contact the surgery to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

(Insert GP's name)