



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **The Freestyle Libre flash glucose monitor**

Information for young people,  
parents and carers

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**This leaflet explains how your prescription glucose monitor works and outlines the advantages and disadvantages of using a Freestyle Libre flash glucose monitor when compared to a continuous glucose monitor (CGM).**

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## **What is the Freestyle Libre?**

The Freestyle Libre is a flash glucose monitor.

It is a small sensor worn on the skin on the outside of your upper arm.

The Libre records glucose levels all of the time. You can see what your glucose levels are whenever you want to, by scanning the sensor.



The Libre measures glucose levels under the skin, not in the blood. This means that Libre results are not always exactly the same as finger-prick levels. This is because changes to the glucose levels under the skin are always slightly behind changing levels in the blood.

**To make sure that you are using the most accurate information, you will still need to finger-prick check if your levels are out of range, if you feel low or if your levels are changing quickly.**

## **How does the Libre work?**

The Libre has two parts:

- **A sensor:** this has a small flexible tip that sits just underneath the skin on your upper arm and measures glucose levels.
- **A reader:** you swipe this over the sensor to get both the glucose level and the direction that your levels are heading (up or down).

- You can also scan with a compatible phone (check <https://www.freestyle.abbott/ie/en/librelink/compatibility-guide.html> to ensure that your phone's compatibility). The sensor can be scanned through clothing.

Each time you scan your sensor, you can access the last eight hours of glucose levels. The Libre also comes with software so that you can look at your results and see patterns in your glucose levels.

The Libre sensor must be changed every 14 days.

## **What's the difference between flash glucose monitoring and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM)?**

CGM tracks your glucose levels all of the time and sends data to a display device (a phone, hand held monitor or pump). With CGM you can set alerts for high levels, low levels or rates of change. With the Libre you only get your readings and trends (on the reader or phone app) when you scan the sensor.

## **Advantages of using a flash glucose monitor**

- You don't need to do so many finger-prick checks (if your levels are steady and you feel well).
- You can see trends when levels are starting to rise or drop. This helps to take action earlier.

You can see what your levels are like at times when you don't normally check with a finger prick, e.g. during the night (either by looking back at your own data or by the sensor being scanned by someone else for you while you are asleep)

## **Disadvantages of using a flash glucose monitor**

- You can't set an alarm for high or low glucose levels, so the Freestyle Libre won't help you recognise a hypo.
- You can get overloaded with data, which can confuse or worry you.

- You still need to do some finger-prick checks.
- You may find wearing the sensor irritating or just not like having it on.

## Using a flash glucose monitor and driving

You can now use the Libre to check your glucose levels before you drive and every two hours during a long journey. These rules have recently changed. This means that drivers with Type 1 diabetes now have more choice in how they check their levels.

## Can I wash / swim with the Libre?

The Libre sensor is water-resistant and can be worn while **bathing**, showering, or **swimming** as long as you:

- Do not take it deeper than 3 feet (1 meter).
- Do not keep it under water for longer than 30 minutes at a time.

For more information about this device, please contact the Paediatric Diabetes team on the numbers below, or go to

[www.freestylelibre.co.uk](http://www.freestylelibre.co.uk)

<b><u>Paediatric Diabetes Nurse</u></b>	<b>0118 322 8922</b>
<b><u>Paediatric Diabetes Dietitian</u></b>	<b>0118 322 8052</b>

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

Paediatric Diabetes Team, November 2022

Next review due: November 2024