



## Guidance on lancet choices for self use by patients

Patients needing to self-monitor blood glucose (where appropriate) will also need to be prescribed lancets to use with a finger pricking (lancing) device to enable them to draw blood samples to test. Lancets are devices used to prick a patient's finger to withdraw a small amount of blood, in order to test blood glucose levels. Lancets are available in different sizes; the higher the gauge, the smaller the diameter of the needle. A higher gauge lancet is generally less painful, but may not provide sufficient blood for testing. Corby and Nene CCGs spend approximately £200K on lancets annually. This bulletin provides some recommendations to help ensure appropriate use.

### Recommendations

- Use the least costly lancets that are suitable for the individual patient - these may not be the one provided with the meter. The preferred lancet within Northamptonshire is the CareSens 0.36mm/28 gauge. A higher gauge (smaller diameter) CareSens lancet, 0.31mm/30 gauge, is also available.
- Lancets are designed to fit into proprietary finger-pricking devices. However most single use lancets can fit several devices.
- Finger pricking devices are not prescribable on an FP10 as they are not listed as appliances under Part IXA of the Drug Tariff. Finger pricking devices are supplied with the blood glucose monitoring meter. The preferred blood glucose monitoring meter in Northamptonshire is CareSens and they supply a finger-pricking device with each meter. Furthermore further supplies of the finger-pricking device can be obtained by contacting their support line on 0800 881 5423.
- Patients who have special visual or psychological needs should be provided with injection devices or needle-free systems that they can use independently for accurate dosing.
- Multi-device lancets which contain a preloaded lancet drum e.g. Fastclix or Multiclix, should be restricted to those with clinical need, e.g. those with dexterity problems or children where disposal of sharps may be impractical or difficult.
- Safety lancets are designed so that the sharp retracts after use. These are primarily for the benefit of healthcare workers to avoid needle stick injury, not to be used by patients self-monitoring blood glucose, therefore they should not routinely be prescribed by GPs on FP10s.
- Ensure that quantities on prescription are appropriate and in line with frequency of testing (i.e. should match quantities and frequency of ordering of blood glucose test strips).
- Lancets are for single use only, patients should be provided with suitable containers for the collection of used lancets. Arrangements should be available for the suitable disposal of these containers.
- Lancets for self-use must not be used by healthcare workers to take samples from more than one patient.

Acknowledgement - These recommendations have been adapted from a PrescQIPP bulletin (B104i) on lancets.

This edition is also available on PathfinderRF  
<http://www.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene>

#### Disclaimer

Information in this newsletter is believed to be accurate and true. NHS Northamptonshire and its employees accept no liability for loss of any nature, to persons, organisations or institutions that may arise as a result of any errors or omissions.