

Press release: New guidelines will make testing requirements simpler for drivers with insulin treated diabetes

The update means drivers can now choose to use flash and continuous glucose monitoring devices to take glucose readings before they drive, or during breaks in driving. Until now, drivers had to check their glucose levels with a finger prick blood reading no more than 2 hours before driving and then again on a break after every 2 hours of driving.

DVLA Chief Executive Julie Lennard said:

We want to make it as safe and as easy as possible for drivers to get on the road. Our panel of medical experts who help set the medical standards for driving are always looking at how we can use advancing technologies, and we're pleased to be able to offer drivers another way of how they monitor their glucose levels.

The guidelines have been updated following discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on driving and diabetes mellitus. The panel consists of leading medical experts in diabetes, DVLA doctors, lay members and observers from other organisations. It works together with the DVLA to provide expert advice with the aim of maintaining and improving road safety.

Nikki Joule, Policy Manager at Diabetes UK, said:

The new guidance, which means that Flash Glucose Monitoring and Continuous Glucose Monitoring can be used in driving, is a major victory for people with diabetes.

Innovative technologies such as these make people's lives easier, because they improve their ability to monitor their blood glucose levels day-to-day and manage their condition safely, including whilst driving.

We look forward to keep on working with the DVLA to make sure people living with diabetes are treated fairly, and that everyone is able to hold a driving licence if they meet medical fitness standards.

1) The guidelines on glucose testing published today apply to car and motorcycle drivers who treat their diabetes with insulin. The requirements for glucose testing for bus and lorry drivers remain the same (finger prick blood reading).

2) Drivers can still use finger prick blood test readings to test their blood glucose levels, should they choose to. The updated guidelines include information for drivers who still prefer to test in this way. The guidelines also include guidance for drivers who treat their diabetes by tablets, diet or both.

3) Drivers can wear a glucose monitor (which is in effect a small sensor) on their skin. These sensors record the driver's glucose levels continuously. Flash Glucose Monitors are used by physically scanning the sensor with a handheld device as required to obtain the readings. Continuous glucose monitoring devices transmit a continuous reading to a handheld device, phone or watch directly from the sensor.

4) If using flash or continuous glucose monitoring, drivers must still confirm their blood glucose level with a finger prick test if:

- their glucose level is 4.0 mmol/L or below
- they experience symptoms of hypoglycaemia
- the glucose monitoring system gives a reading that is not consistent with the symptoms they are experiencing (for example, they feel the symptoms of hypoglycaemia but the reading does not indicate this)

5) Drivers who treat their diabetes with insulin must tell DVLA. Drivers who treat their diabetes by diet only do not need to tell DVLA. If in any doubt, drivers should speak to their GP or a medical professional involved in their treatment.