



Tablet Press **EXTRA**

The prescribing newsletter for GPs, nurses and pharmacists
NHS Northamptonshire



April 2020

Diabetes and COVID-19

Coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms and complications in people with diabetes. If patients become unwell or have a high fever, they should be asked to follow “sick day rules advice” for [type 1 diabetes](#) and [type 2 diabetes](#). Diabetes UK has some useful [patient information](#) as well as specific advice during the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

SGLT-2 Inhibitors (empagliflozin, canagliflozin, dapagliflozin, ertugliflozin) in type 1 diabetes

The local diabetologists recommend that SGLT-2 inhibitors are stopped during this pandemic because of the increased risk of DKA. The dose of insulin may need to be increased. There should be very few patients with [type 1 diabetes](#) on SGLT-2 inhibitors within Northamptonshire. Please contact the community diabetes team or secondary care if advice is required.

SGLT-2 Inhibitors in type 2 diabetes

SGLT-2 inhibitors should be temporarily **stopped** and blood ketones measured if patients become “unwell”, as treatment with SGLT-2 inhibitors may predispose them to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), which may be euglycaemic. See [MHRA](#) warnings of reports of DKA in patients taking SGLT-2 inhibitors, some fatal and presenting atypically, with only moderately increased blood glucose levels (< 14mmol/l).

Patients should be informed of the [signs and symptoms](#) of DKA and advised to seek medical advice if they develop any of these. Blood ketone levels should be tested in patients with ketoacidosis symptoms, even if plasma glucose is normal. If blood ketone testing is unavailable, urine testing may be substituted. Anyone with ketonuria or ketonaemia should be referred to A&E.

Blood ketone testing

➤ **Type 1 diabetes** - GP practices should ensure that patients with Type 1 diabetes have access to blood ketone testing i.e. they have a ketone testing meter and access to ketone test strips on repeat prescription. Patients with **type 1 diabetes** who do not have access to a ketone testing meter can obtain a GlucoRx HCT meter directly from GlucoRx, which will be delivered to their home.

The patient ordering system can be accessed through:

- <https://www.glucoRx.co.uk/meter/>
- Customer Care can be contacted through orders@glucoRx.co.uk or 01483 755133 to place orders.
- Reference code: **NENE20HCT will need to be quoted**, in email, call or patient order form.
- A training video is also available <https://www.glucoRx.co.uk/manuals-and-videos/>

A prescription for GlucoRx HCT Ketone test strips 1*10 will be required from the surgery.

➤ **Type 2 diabetes** - anyone prescribed a SGLT-2 inhibitor who become acutely “unwell” should be advised to contact their GP surgery for a **same day** ketone test. If ketones are present they should be referred to A&E.

If ketones are not present, they should be advised to seek further medical assistance if do not improve.

All practices, OOH services and PCN Hot sites should ensure that they have ketone testing meters and strips available. Practices can place an order for Caresens Dual blood glucose and ketone meters from Spirit Healthcare, either by contacting customer services on 0800 8815423 or email cs@spirit-healthcare.co.uk.

NOTE - All patients should continue to monitor their blood glucose levels using their existing meter and test strips. The glucose test strips that are compatible with dual meters are significantly more expensive than the preferred first-line choice of Finetest Lite.

The diabetes MDT is available for patient advice and support 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week and can be contacted on 01536 492121 or 01327 708113.

The medicines management team would like to thank Dr Anne Kilvert and Lynsey Burgess for their contribution in producing this bulletin.

This edition is also available on GP Portal

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