**Derbyshire diabetes and Covid briefing 27.4.20**

**Frequently asked questions:**

1. **What diabetes care can I safely offer to my patients during the pandemic?**

The BMA/RCGP advice is to prioritise people with HbA1c of 75 or more, or with a history of DKA in the past year.

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/Policy/A-Z-policy/2020/covid19/RCGP-guidance/202003233RCGPGuidanceprioritisationroutineworkduringCovidFINAL.ashx?la=enT>

The key principles of care currently are

* Offer all care virtually where possible
* Only invite people into the practice for bloods when the benefit to their diabetes management outweighs the small risk of encountering infection
* Choose a cut off that is workable for your practice eg inviting people with diabetes to have a blood test if their last HbA1c is 75 (9%) or more. If staffing allows, some practices are inviting patients with last HbA1c over 64 (8%). For these patients bloods and a telephone review would improve their health outcomes and better diabetes control means better outcomes in the event of Covid-19 infection
* Encourage home monitoring of weight and BP
* Routine foot checks and ACRs are not recommended during the pandemic.
* If we offer no diabetes care for the duration of the pandemic, we are unlikely to easily catch up and these appointments will be lost, so it is important to continue some care.

1. **What additional assessment do patients with diabetes need if seen re Covid-19?**

Advise anyone who has blood glucose or ketone testing meters at home to test and record in their notes before bringing them to a red hub site or your practice.

Most patients do not have blood glucose testing at home and will need a blood glucose test on arrival, and if blood glucose over 12 then they need a blood ketone check. See attached guidance re ketone testing. The second document is a printable guide you may want to attach to your blood glucose and ketone meters.

Blood glucose and ketones can be done on the same meter, but this has led to SEAs where the clinician put in the wrong strip and then acted on the wrong result. At UHDB and my own practice, we now always use different meters. However, when advising a person with type 1 to have a blood ketone meter at home, we would suggest they check BG and ketones on the same meter for convenience.

  

1. **How do I interpret blood ketone results?**

• Less than 0.6 mmol/L is normal

• 0.6 to 1.5 mmol/L – person is at risk of developing DKA so test again after 2 hours if at home or arrange review with safety netting in primary care. Ensure a person with type 1 diabetes has access to and understands sick day rules. Phone for urgent advice if in any doubt.

• 1.6 to 2.9 mmol/L- person is at risk of DKA and should contact their diabetes team as soon as possible, or health care professional can seek advice on their behalf. They will need to follow the sick day rules.

• 3 mmol/L or higher- person is at high risk of DKA:

If Ketones > 3.0, but well, and able to eat and drink, follow sick day rules - contact the advice line immediately, aim to manage at home

If ketones > 3.0 and ill, especially abdominal pain / vomiting- needs urgent admission

If ketones > 3.0 and if in doubt /unsure of sick day rules / can’t access advice- needs urgent admission

1. **Latest update on SGLT2i drugs "flozins"**

People with type 2 diabetes can safely continue these drugs unless they become unwell, and then they need to stop them immediately and be seen in practice for a blood ketone check.

A small number of people with type 1 diabetes are prescribed them under specialist supervision, and the advice is now to stop them for the duration of the pandemic as they can mask the symptoms of Covid-19.

Most patients will have been contacted already by their specialist team, but if you find a patient in this situation, please ask them to stop the SGLT2i tablet and phone their specialist nurse for advice on adjusting their insulin.

1. **How can I arrange bloods for patients?**

Practices who usually provide a phlebotomy service are continuing to do so when a blood test is needed. Please see the attached helpful guide as to where community clinics are still running in South Derbyshire.



1. **How can I get urgent advice for a patient with diabetes?**

**South Derbyshire and Erewash:** Advice line for health professionals regarding any patient with diabetes and this can also be given out to people with type 1 diabetes: 01332 787671 from 8am-6pm.

Same-day advice in hours is available at dhft.diabetesteam@nhs.net

**North Derbyshire:** the advice line for health professionals and people with Type 1 diabetes is 07880 147785 available Mon-Fri 8am-5pm. DSNs at CRH also can be bleeped on 781 or in-patient nurses on 013 or 172.

Out of hours: CRH on call medical team.

1. **How can I get non urgent advice in managing complex patients with diabetes?**

**North Derbyshire**: you can still email for advice on

[DCHST.Communitydiabetesnurses@nhs.net](mailto:DCHST.Communitydiabetesnurses@nhs.net) or phone 01629 817878 or task your DSN.

**South Derbyshire and Erewash**: most DSNs have been redeployed so cannot answer tasks. Please email [dhft.ids@nhs.net](mailto:dhft.ids@nhs.net) or send a task (linked to a patient whose share has been released) to the admin group at IDS/EDS asking for advice.

1. **How can I advise patients with diabetes who are fasting during Ramadan**?

Please see the links here and the attached guide with education resources both for health professionals and people with diabetes.

For clinicians: <https://drc.bmj.com/content/3/1/e000108>

For people with diabetes:  <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/ramadan>



1. **How can I get a blood glucose meter to a patient?**

The Derbyshire formulary recommended meters are listed here: <http://www.derbyshiremedicinesmanagement.nhs.uk/assets/Clinical_Guidelines/Formulary_by_BNF_chapter_prescribing_guidelines/BNF_chapter_6/Blood%20glucose%20monitoring%20meter%20formulary.pdf>

People with type 1 diabetes all need access to blood ketone testing strips and need a category B meter from the formulary above. All the companies are happy to send the meter directly to the patient so you just need to give the phone number to the patient:

Type 1: Glucomen Areo on 0800 243667 or Caresens Dual on 0800 881 5423.

Type 2: Wavesense Jazz on 0800 093 1812 or Tee2+ on 0800 881 5423

People with type 2 diabetes only need blood glucose testing strips on repeat long term if they are on hypo causing medications such as insulin or sulphonylureas or taking steroids. They can be useful short term if a patient is symptomatic or has a new high HbA1c>75 and you are supporting a patient remotely. Most meters get delivered with 25 free strips, and an extra 50 can be prescribed as an acute script if clinically needed.

1. **What footcare is available in Derbyshire currently?**

Routine foot checks are not recommended during the pandemic.

There is still a community podiatry service for symptomatic patients who do not have a break in the skin.

For a patient with an ulcer or other break in the skin on the foot, please refer urgently to the foot clinics which are running in Chesterfield and London Road Community Hospital using your usual referral pathways.

1. **Is there any diabetes structured education available currently?**

Patients who want face to face groups can be referred and join a waiting list for when groups can restart. In the meantime, if people have time to spare, these are great resources which are free:

The Diabetes UK Learning Zone tailors the education for type 1 or type 2 and what treatment the person takes:

<https://learningzone.diabetes.org.uk/>

Bertie online is specifically for people with type 1 and has good modules on carb counting:

<https://www.bertieonline.org.uk/>

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