NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS:

Changes to prescribing of diabetic lancets and needles for insulin pens.

The NHS is asking doctors and other prescribers to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some treatments. This is because the treatments are:

- Not as safe as other treatments OR
- Not as good (effective) as other treatments OR
- More expensive than other treatments that do the same thing.

This includes diabetic lancets and needles for insulin pens.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

Which needles for insulin pens are affected?

There are many different types of needles available for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens, as well as diabetic lancets. They vary greatly in cost, with no significant difference in how well they work so it is important not to spend limited NHS money on insulin needles or lancets that are more expensive for no extra benefit.
Needles also vary in length and the 4mm needles are considered safer as they reduce the risk of the insulin being injected into the muscle, instead of under the skin.

Why will some lancets and needles for insulin pens not be prescribed anymore?

Needles for insulin pens should be an appropriate length for safety reasons and should represent good value. Needles that do not represent good value should no longer be prescribed.
Prescribing of lancets should take into consideration cost-effectiveness and consider the individual needs of the patient, including ensuring that quantities on prescription are appropriate for single use only and in line with the frequency of recommended testing.

What options are available instead?

There are lots of alternative diabetic lancets and needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens available on the NHS that represent good value for money. Your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional will talk to you about the different options so that you can come to a joint decision about which needles and/or lancets are best for you. They will also discuss how to use a different sized needle if you need to switch to shorter ones.

Where can I find more information and support?

- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ or call 020 8423 8999.
- The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) http://www.fit4diabetes.com/united-kingdom/
- If you have further queries about this medication, please contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 389 6819 or sneeicb.pals@nhs.net
- Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced: https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/