



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Circular 011 /16

16 March 2016

Dear Pharmacist,

The purpose of this letter is to notify you of a decision made by the HSE. The decision relates to the reimbursement of Blood Glucose Test Strips effective from 1 April 2016.

The National Clinical Programme for Diabetes has provided updated guidance on self testing for people with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Research has indicated that blood glucose testing has a limited benefit for many patients who **do not** take insulin to manage their diabetes. Based on best evidence, the HSE is introducing changes to the number of blood glucose test strips it will provide for people with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus while ensuring those who need test strips to help manage their diabetes will continue to have access to them. The new changes are based on recommendations from a review by the Medicines Management Programme (MMP). This review looked at international evidence and best practice guidelines along with national usage (available on www.HSE.ie/yourmedicines).

The HSE will be implementing the recommendations from the 1 April 2016. From that date the HSE will reimburse only the recommended quantity per patient per pharmacy. Claims for the dispensing of blood glucose test strips will be validated on a monthly basis.

This initiative will reduce unnecessary consumption of test strips by funding their supply based on best practice guidelines while ensuring that those who need test strips to help manage their diabetes will continue to have access to them.

The National Clinical Programme for Diabetes has developed a leaflet on this initiative, a copy of which is enclosed. It can be downloaded from <http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/clinical/natclinprog/diabetesprogramme/Selftesting/>. Further copies can be ordered from www.healthpromotion.ie to assist patients to understand the Guidelines.

Prescribers have been enabled to register for exceptional arrangements those patients whom they believe should receive reimbursement support for more than the recommended quantity of testing strips.

Pharmacists, through the enhanced visibility system available to them, can establish whether the patient had been notified to the HSE as requiring extra reimbursement support. Eligibility confirmation will only be available through the enhanced visibility system. (Circular 3/15 pertains).

Unless the patient has been registered for exceptional arrangements, the quantities recommended will be the maximum reimbursed on a monthly basis.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Marie Hoey".

Anne Marie Hoey
Primary Care Reimbursement & Eligibility

8 March 2016

Reimbursement of Blood Glucose Test Strips (BGTS) for Patients with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus

Dear Colleagues

The Medicines Management Programme (MMP) has recently reviewed international literature, guidelines and recommendations for self-monitoring of Blood Glucose (SMBG) for patients with non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. The National Clinical Programme for Diabetes (NCPD) has also recently published guidance on self-testing for people with Type 2 diabetes. The HSE, under the guidance of the Medicines Management Programme (MMP) and the NCPD, has updated its reimbursement arrangements for blood glucose test strips (BGTS). The MMP report is available on www.hse.ie/yourmedicines along with Frequently Asked Questions for healthcare professionals and patients. The NCPD guidance on self-testing for people with Type 2 diabetes can be downloaded from <http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/clinical/natclinprog/diabetesprogramme/Selftesting/> or ordered from www.healthpromotion.ie to assist patients to understand the guidelines.

Following this review the MMP recommends that reimbursement of the Blood Glucose Test Strips for patients with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus be revised as follows:

- **There will be no limit for patients treated with insulin.**
- **Patients managed on sulphonylurea or meglitinide drugs will be reimbursed for 2 boxes of test strips per month i.e. 1,200 test strips/annum.**
- **Patients managed on oral hypoglycaemic drugs other than sulphonylurea or meglitinide drugs will be reimbursed for 1 box of test strips per month i.e. 600 test strips/annum.**
- **Patients managed through diet alone will be reimbursed for 2 boxes of test strips per annum i.e. 100 test strips/annum.**

The recommendation was accepted by the HSE for implementation from the 1st April 2016.

It is appreciated that there are clinical situations where enhanced blood glucose monitoring may be required (e.g. acute illness, therapy changes, pregnancy) and in such cases extra reimbursement support is available via an on-line application system through the GP application suite. This service is available to allow immediate access to additional test strips reimbursed under the community drugs schemes.

With best wishes,



Prof Michael Barry
National Clinical Lead, Medicines Management Programme
<http://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines>