

NHS England Guidance: Medicines of Low Value

NEEDLES FOR PRE-FILLED AND REUSABLE INSULIN PENS

Summary

The NHS does not recommend the routine prescribing of insulin pen needles that cost more than £5 per 100 needles. The most cost-effective options are recommended as first line option ⁽¹⁾. No routine exceptions have been identified in the NHS England guidance of items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care.

NHS England category: Products which are clinically effective but where more cost-effective products are available this includes products that have been subject to excessive price inflation ⁽¹⁾

Pen needles are available in a range of sizes from 4mm to 12mm and different needles will fit different pens. **Some needles will fit all major insulin delivery pen devices currently available** (Table 3). The cost of insulin pen needles varies from £2.75 to £30.08 for a pack of 100.

The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK ⁽²⁾ considers the 4mm needle to be the safest pen needle for adults and children regardless of age, gender and Body Mass Index (BMI). Using needles of a shorter length helps to prevent intramuscular injection of insulin. (IM injection of insulin should be avoided as it can result in unpredictable blood glucose levels).

Prescribing recommendations for Primary Care

- Prescribers should not initiate insulin pen needles that cost more than £5 per 100 needles.
- For patients using needles that cost more than £5 per 100 needles, these should be changed to more cost effective alternatives as appropriate, ensuring compatibility with insulin delivery pen device.
- Needle of choice should be the most cost effective 4mm needle.
- For patients currently using longer pen needle lengths (8mm, 12mm), should be changed to a shorter needle length (6mm or less) but only after discussion with a healthcare professional, to ensure they receive advice on the correct injection technique.
- Liaise with your local community pharmacists to ensure adequate stocks are in place, and check compatibilities with insulin delivery pen devices.

As prices for some needle sizes in the same brand name may exceed £5.00 per 100 needles, the table⁽⁴⁾ below (Table 1) is provided as a guide to the needle sizes available at, or below the indicated threshold price (Drug Tariff³).

To allow patients greater freedom in choosing their preferred needles, practices may prescribe any insulin needle that has a price of less than £5.00 per 100, as detailed in the Drug Tariff.²

Table 1:

Name of Needle	Insulin Needle Sizes						Review these sizes to consider shorter length needle, as above			
	4mm/31g	4mm/32g	5mm/31g	5mm/32g	6mm/31g	6mm/32g	8mm/31g	10mm/29g	10mm/30g	12mm/29g
4Sure [®]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
BD Viva [®]		✓	✓		✓		✓			
Carefine [®]		✓	✓		✓		✓			
GlucoRx Carepoint [®]	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
GlucoRx Carepoint Ultra [®]		✓								
GlucoRx Finepoint [®]	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
GlucoRx Finepoint Ultra [®]		✓								
Mylife Penfine Classic [®]		✓	✓			✓	✓			
Neon Verifine [®]	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Neon Verifine Ultra [®]		✓								
Omnican Fine [®]		✓		✓		✓				
PROFine [®]		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓
TriCare [®]		✓	✓		✓		✓			

Table 2: Needles exceeding the price threshold of £5.00 per 100 and thus deemed to be Non-formulary based on Drug Tariff ⁽³⁾

BD Micro-Fine + [®]
BD Micro-Fine Ultra [®]
Glucoject [®]
HaemoFine [®]
IME-FINE [®]
Insupen [®]
Microdot Droplet [®]
Mylife Clickfine [®]
Nanopass [®]
NeedleBay Fine [®]
NovoFine [®]
Omnican Fine [®] (in all other sizes than in table above)
Unifine Pentips [®]
Unifine Pentips Plus [®]

Table 3: Examples⁽⁵⁾ of needles that are <£5 per 100 which are compatible with all insulin pens and devices

Needle	Manufacturer	Gauge	Length	Compatible pens/devices
BD VIVA [®]	BectonDickenson	32g	4mm	Novo Nordisk, Lilly, Aventis and Autopen pens/devices.
GlucoRx Fine Point Brand [®] GlucoRx Carepoint Ultra [®]	GlucoRx	31g 31g 31g 32g	4mm 5mm 6mm	Novo Nordisk, Lilly, Aventis and Autopen pens/devices
Omican Fine [®] (don't have an inner sheath - to discourage re-sheathing - this should be highlighted to patients)	BBraun	31g 31g	4mm 6mm	Novo Nordisk, Lilly, Aventis and Autopen pens/devices.

A Patient Information leaflet is available on the CCG website [here](#).

Version 1

Approved:

- **Waltham Forest and East London Medicines Optimisation and Commissioning Committee: November 2019**
- **NHS Tower Hamlets CCG Prescribing Delivery Board: 12th February 2020**

References

1. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. *Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs*. s.l. : NHS England, June 2019.
2. UK, The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT); The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK. [Online] [Cited: 05 September 2019.] <http://fit4diabetes.com/united-kingdom/>.
3. Drug tariff October 2019 <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/Drug%20Tariff%20October%202019.pdf>
4. Berkshire West Integrated Care System –Insulin needle formulary April 2019
5. Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust – Insulin Poster, April 2018