

Patient information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS: [Changes to prescribing of needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens](#)

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

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

This includes needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens

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

[What is this change and what is the reason for it?](#)

NHS guidance states that needles for insulin pens should be an appropriate length for safety reasons and should represent good value.

Needles that are 4mm in length are considered safer as they reduce the risk of insulin being injected into the muscle, instead of under the skin.

Patients currently using longer pen needle lengths (8mm and 12mm) should be changed to a shorter length (6mm or less) as they are safer. This change should only happen after a discussion with your doctor.

There are many different types of insulin pen needles available at varying costs. The North East London ICB recommends prescribing selected cost-effective brands of disposable pen needles that cost less than £4.50 per 100 needles as these represent good value for money.

[What options are available instead?](#)

There are lots of alternative needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens available on the NHS that represent good value for money.

Your doctor, nurse or practice pharmacist will talk to you about the different options so that you can come to a joint decision about which needles are best

[Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care – needles for pre-filled and reusable insulin pens](#)

for you and show you how to use a different size needle if you need to switch to shorter ones.

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP, or the person who prescribed the medication to you.
- <https://fit4diabetes.com/fit-tools/>
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ or freephone 0800 345 7115
- Healthwatch is an online resource where you can feedback on your healthcare experiences: www.healthwatch.co.uk

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-policy-guidance/>