

This guideline has been developed in collaboration with local Diabetes Specialist Nurses with consideration of availability, reliability, cost and compatibility. The pen needles recommended are compatible with all licensed insulin and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist pens (where needed) available in the UK.

[NICE Guideline \[NG17\]](#) recommends that after taking clinical factors into account, pen needles with the lowest acquisition cost should be chosen¹. BNSSG CCG advises that pen needles costing >£4 per 100 should not be initiated and that current prescribing of pen needles >4 per 100 should be reviewed and deprescribed where appropriate.

Pen needle choice for BNSSG Prescribing

‘Screw On’ Pen Needles		
	Sizes	Cost per 100*
Insupen Original <small>Spirit Healthcare</small>	4mm/32 gauge	£2.49
	5mm/31 gauge	
Microdot Max <small>Cambridge Sensors</small>	4mm/32 gauge	£2.74
	6mm/31 gauge	
GreenFine Neon	4mm/32 gauge	£2.75
	5mm/31 gauge	
GlucorX CarePoint GlucorX Ltd	4mm/31 gauge	£2.75
	5mm/31 gauge	
BD Viva <small>Becton Dickinson</small>	4mm/32 gauge	£3.59**
	5mm/31 gauge	
‘Safety’ Pen Needles—Adult guidance only		
	Sizes	Cost per 100*
Apollo Pro-Shield Safety Pen Needles	4mm/31 gauge	£9.95
	5mm/30 gauge	
Microdot Max Safety Pen Needles	5mm/30 gauge	£12.89

Green: First line, suitable for most patients
Blue: Second line, only prescribe where clinical factors deem necessary

*Prices taken from April 2024 Drug Tariff
 ** Pack size = 90, therefore a pack costs £3.59

Safety Pen needles

These are considerably more expensive and should only be prescribed for patients who have their medication administered by a healthcare worker/carer, they should not be prescribed for patients who self-administer their insulin, GLP-1 or GLP-1/GIP receptor agonist.

Paediatric patients requiring safety pen needles are currently excluded from the safety needle recommendation made in this guidance due to administration and training issues in this patient cohort. These patients should be continued on the safety pen needle as recommended by their specialist.

Secondary care prescribing

Secondary care discharge summaries will recommend pen needles using needle length and gauge only. Please ensure a formulary choice preferred brand is

prescribed within primary care. Patients should be informed that brands are interchangeable, and the needle size and gauge is the same although a different brand may have been used by secondary care.

Needle length

The [Injection Technique Matters](#) website recommends the use of 4mm or 5mm needle lengths only and suggests that needle lengths longer than 4mm may lead to unpredictable blood glucose control due to increased potential of intramuscular injection².

Sharps bin prescribing

All patients should have a sharps bin for safe disposal of their hypodermic equipment. If prescribing these for patients they should be prescribed as either Sharpsguard or Sharpsafe yellow lid (when disposing of pen needles used for insulin or GLP-1 receptor agonist). Disposal of these is via the local authority.

References

1. Type 1 diabetes in adults: diagnosis and management [Internet]. Nice.org.uk. 2015 (Updated August 2022) [cited 28 March 2024]. Available from: [Recommendations | Type 1 diabetes in adults: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)
2. Correct Injection Technique in Diabetes Care Best Practice Guideline [Internet]. TREND-DIABETES Limited; [cited 28 March 2024]. Available from: <https://trenddiabetes.online/portfolio/best-practice-guideline-to-support-correct-injection-technique-in-diabetes-care/>