

# A guide to continuous glucose monitoring (CGM)

Using a CGM could potentially be one of the best steps you can take for your diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

This quick reference guide answers questions you might have about a CGM. If you choose to, it may also help you explain your CGM to family and friends.

## CGMs and how they work

### What is a continuous glucose monitor (CGM)?

A CGM is a wearable device with a tiny sensor that sits just under your skin.<sup>2</sup>

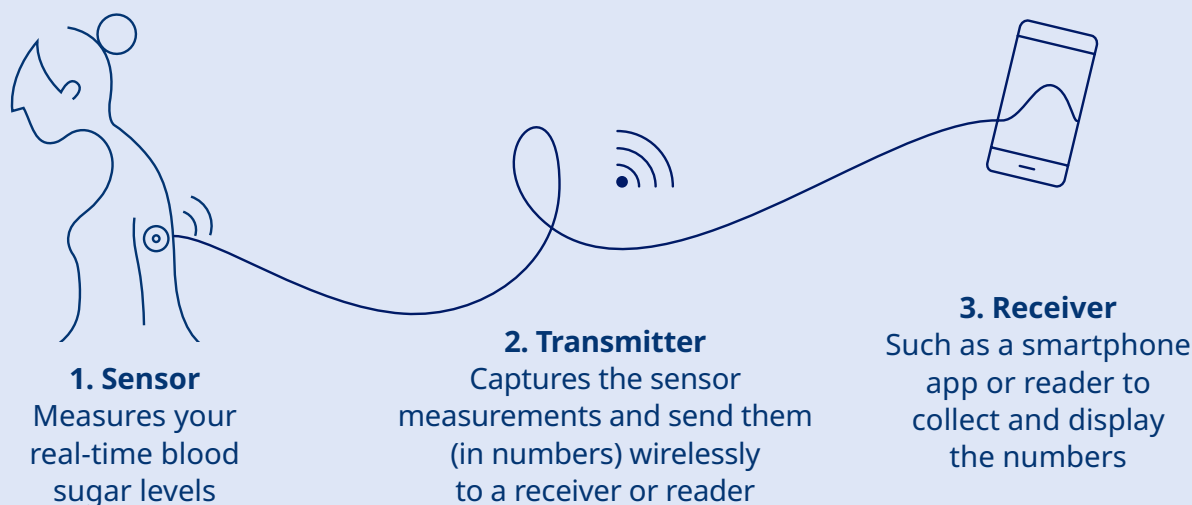
### Why is a CGM a smart move for diabetes control?

A CGM can help improve diabetes management by showing the immediate effects of food choices, physical activity, and timing and dosage of medication.<sup>2</sup> It helps you avoid low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) and high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia) so that you can better manage your diabetes by acting quickly to balance your sugar levels.<sup>2</sup>

### How do CGMs work?

A CGM measures sugar levels in the fluid between your cells (interstitial fluid). You can measure your levels in 'real time' without needing to prick your finger for every reading.<sup>2,3</sup>

#### A CGM has three basic parts:<sup>2,3</sup>



\* Interstitial measures are just a few minutes behind your actual blood sugar levels<sup>2</sup>

# Everyday life with a CGM

## **Does attaching a CGM device hurt?**

Some people say they feel mild discomfort when first inserting the sensor, but there is no pain afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

## **Where do you wear it on the body?**

The CGM sensor is a small device that sits just beneath the skin on your abdomen or arm.<sup>2</sup>

The sensor is inserted using an applicator and it is held in place with special tape.<sup>3,4</sup>

## **Are CGMs easy to use?**

Modern CGMs have been described as easy to use.<sup>5</sup> Your healthcare professional will show you how to insert the sensor.

## **Can I carry on with my life as normal with a CGM in place?**

Yes, you can. Once you get used to wearing it you might not even notice it.<sup>3</sup>

## **What if I get my CGM wet?**

The sensor can get wet, and can be comfortably worn while swimming, showering, or exercising. But if you plan to be in the water for over 30 minutes it is a good idea to get an adhesive 'performance' cover to protect it.<sup>3</sup>

## **Will this make exercise more difficult?**

You can exercise as normal when wearing a CGM – the sensor is water-resistant and clothing does not interfere with readings.<sup>3</sup>

# The practicalities of a CGM

## **Am I eligible for a CGM?**

More and more people with diabetes are becoming eligible for a CGM on prescription or through reimbursement schemes, as official guidelines have widened recommendations of use.<sup>3,6,7</sup> If you have either type 1 diabetes or type 2 diabetes and are on insulin therapy, or often have high or low blood sugar levels, speak to your healthcare professional about whether a CGM is right for you.<sup>2</sup>

## **Are all CGMs the same?**

Many different CGMs are available, but they all basically do the same thing and measurements are sent to your phone or a reader every few minutes.<sup>2,4</sup> A 'flash monitor' is a slightly different device, where you need to wave (scan) your phone or reader over the sensor to see the results.<sup>4</sup>

## **Is a CGM the same as an insulin pump?**

No, they are different. A CGM measures your sugar levels and insulin pumps deliver insulin throughout the day. You can use both devices at the same time.<sup>2,8</sup>

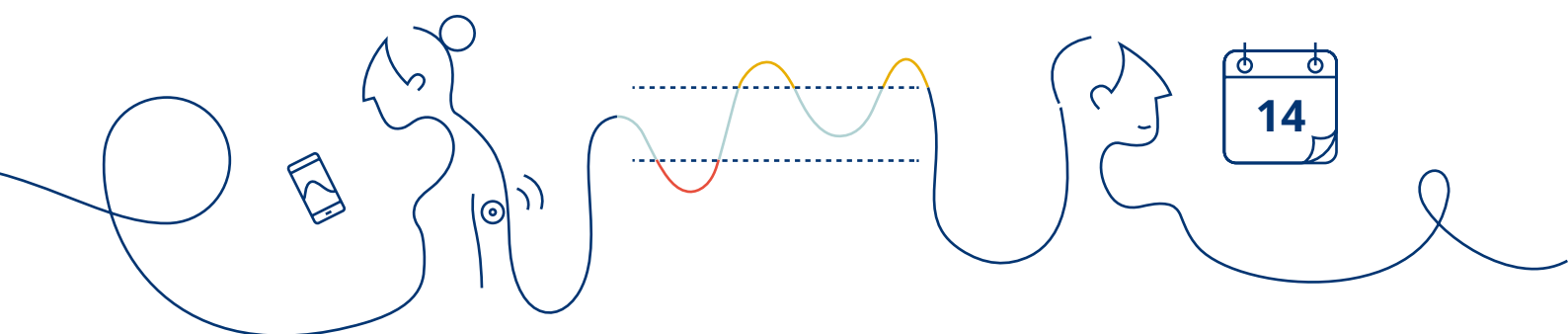
# Monitoring diabetes with CGM

## What will my CGM tell me?

You will see a lot of new information when you start using a CGM, including new measures like **Time in Range**.<sup>6</sup> Your healthcare team will help you make sense of the numbers on your reader so that you can understand your daily blood sugar levels better.<sup>6</sup>

## What is Time in Range?

Time in Range is an up-and-coming diabetes measure produced by your CGM. It shows the amount of time you spend within your target blood sugar range (between 70 and 180 mg/dL or 3.9–10 mmol/l for most people). It can help people with diabetes feel more in control.<sup>9</sup>



Your Time In Range is measured using numbers from your CGM.<sup>6,10</sup>

Your Time in Range is shown in colour on a one-page report called the 'AGP', which is automatically generated by your CGM.<sup>6</sup> You can look at the AGP with your healthcare professional and you can learn how to read it yourself!<sup>6</sup>

The AGP summarises your blood sugar over 14 days and also shows each individual day.<sup>6</sup> You can see everyday effects of lifestyle, food, medication, and any changes you make.<sup>6</sup>

## How does all this CGM information help me to manage my diabetes?

Some of the important readings you will see are your Time in Range, Time below Range and Time above Range.<sup>6</sup> Experts recommended most people with diabetes should spend at least 17 hours per day in range, with no more than an hour below range and 6 hours above range.<sup>6</sup> Your healthcare professional will tell you your personal target blood sugar range.

Together with your healthcare professional, you can use these readings to check your diabetes treatment and discuss lifestyle changes to help you better manage your sugar levels.<sup>6</sup> More time spent in range means a lower risk of health complications.<sup>6</sup>

# Keeping CGM diabetes control simple

## Isn't CGM too time-consuming?

With CGM you can check your interstitial sugar levels at a glance, any time you want.<sup>2</sup> When you see your healthcare professional, the CGM will have your readings stored to help you make accurate decisions together to manage your diabetes.<sup>5</sup>

## Will CGM mean a more restrictive lifestyle?

People report that CGM, particularly the measure Time in Range, helps them to plan and feel more in control of their diabetes.<sup>9</sup> They are freer to enjoy a life full of their usual everyday activities because they aren't worrying about their blood sugars so much.<sup>9,11</sup>

## Will my healthcare professional expect me to provide all the CGM information?

Absolutely not – the CGM will have saved all the information you need.<sup>6,10</sup> The extra information will help you understand the peaks and dips in your blood sugars more quickly than the HbA1c test, and you can discuss with your healthcare professional how you can spend more time in your target blood sugar range.<sup>6</sup>

## Will knowing more about how food affects my blood sugars make eating more restrictive?

A CGM does not stop you eating as normal – you are absolutely free to eat the foods you enjoy, and follow a diet that works for you and your diabetes. But you will be able to see your sugar levels before, during and after you eat, so you can see the effects of food, and act immediately to bring levels down if needed.<sup>9,10,12</sup>

**Remember! If you have any questions about your diabetes, CGMs or Time in Range speak to your doctor or nurse.**

## References

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