



Wearing a Libre sensor when the sun's shining

When the sun's shining many sensor wearers will take the opportunity to spend time outdoors, but what effect does this have on our readings and self-management of our diabetes? We've looked at some of the measures you should be thinking about before venturing out into the sunshine.

In general, insulin is more quickly absorbed in warm weather but how heat and light from the sun affects glucose levels will depend also on food intake (particularly carbohydrates), activity level and how well the body is hydrated. It is

known that diabetics are at an increased likelihood of being dehydrated and that this could lead to more hypos. It's also worth mentioning here that the sensor gives more accurate readings when the body and skin is well hydrated, so keep drinking those fluids, though alcohol and caffeine are best avoided.

This report outlines the key considerations you should think about and plan for when the sun's shining or any hot day.

HYDRATION



To avoid dehydration and hypos, T1Ds will need to monitor their blood glucose, or interstitial fluid as is the case with the Libre sensor, more often than usual. Changes may also need to be made to carb ratios and bolus injections of insulin. Fortunately, using a sensor enables users to scan at any time so frequent monitoring throughout the day is advisable, particularly if out in the hot sun!

Most of us with diabetes are used to carrying hypo treatments and this is especially important when out on a warm day. But, remember to ensure that 'treats' are suitable for the environment and won't melt or deteriorate in hot conditions.

PROTECT YOUR MEDICATION



Insulin and other medications can be sensitive to the sun and diabetics need to take care not to expose these to direct sunlight or allow them to become too warm. If you're not familiar with the limitation, you should check the packaging information and instructions for details of how

high temperatures can affect the insulin or medicine. [Abbott recommend that the Libre sensor kit is stored at 4-25°C.] Insulin should not be placed directly on ice or on a gel pack and remember not to leave medication in a hot car, by a pool, in direct sunlight, or on the beach!

If you're wearing your pump beware that it can become too hot in the sun, so be mindful of how the hot heat can affect the insulin contained within the equipment.

KEEPING YOUR SENSOR ATTACHED



A common issue with Libre wearers is that the sensor is prone to knocks which may render that sensor defunct. It can also be a challenge to keep insulin pump sites and other diabetes gadgets stuck safely and firmly in the heat. Users often tape down sensors for added security, but these are likely to peel at the edges and unfurl in the heat becoming a sticky mess. A plaster or tape is only really a temporary solution but our Libreband™ provides a more long-lasting answer. For those who feel self-conscious when wearing a sensor that's visible to the public it's also a good option.

PHYSICAL EXERTION

Long periods of inactivity in the sun can affect insulin sensitivity, raising glucose levels and giving higher than usual readings. So, if solely sunbathing it's possible you will see a spike in sensor readings. Equally, when engaging in an activity in hot conditions, and sweating profusely,

the sensor wearer may become dehydrated and glucose levels go up. Again, the sensor is vital in identifying trends and being able to anticipate and take corrective action where appropriate. Remember to check the direction of the arrows when taking a reading.



Don't forget too that physical activity can affect insulin sensitivity for up to 48 hours, which can lead to lower blood sugars over this time. And even when it doesn't seem very hot outside, the combination of heat and humidity can be problematic as sweat can't evaporate from the body as usual which would usually cool the body down. This could lead to hypoglycaemia too.

COVER UP

Of course we should always avoid overexposure to UV rays from both direct sunlight and tanning lamps, and take precautions to avoid sunburn. As well as regularly applying sunscreen to exposed areas and the need for constant reapplication, those with diabetes need to pay particular attention to protecting their feet.



Type ones are advised not to walk around barefoot as they may not have the sensitivity to feel if their feet are burning. This is especially important if the wearer is known to suffer from neuropathy in their feet. Sun cream should be

applied to the toes and top of the feet and feet checked regularly for any signs of cuts, blisters, burning or abnormality.

Another consideration is that high blood sugars can sap the skin of moisture, leading to dry skin that can become red and sore, or crack and peel. All of which can lead to infection.

EYE PROTECTION



It's especially important to protect our eyes from the sun to avoid any damage to the retina. When picking suitable sunglasses always check the UV rating, whether they provide 100% UV protection and if they are CE marked so conform to UK/EU safety standards.

HEAT AND ILLNESS

As those with diabetes are more susceptible to hypos in hot weather, it's important not to disregard any symptoms, such as sweating and tiredness which could be a sign of low glucose levels. Heat exhaustion (also called heat stroke) can develop when the body finds it difficult to keep cool and in certain situations will need urgent medical treatment.

Sunburn should be treated as an injury, so whilst the skin is healing, T1s should follow 'sick day rules' just as in the case of stress or other illness.

With care and consideration (and help from the Libre sensor), diabetes shouldn't get in the way of us enjoying the sunshine, just like anyone else.

10 TIPS FOR SPENDING TIME IN THE SUN

- 1 Stay hydrated and limit exposure to direct sunlight, especially at peak times of the day.
- 2 Scan regularly to check your levels and make considered adjustments.
- 3 Keep diabetes supplies and equipment (including sensor reader or phone) in a cool place and out of direct sunlight.
- 4 Keep a source of fast acting treatment at hand for dealing with hypos.
- 5 Wear sunscreen, ensuring you cover the feet and toes. Take particular care when applying sun cream around the sensor so not to loosen the adhesion to your skin.
- 6 Consider wearing loose, light-coloured clothing, and wear flip flops on hot ground, especially if you have neuropathy.
- 7 Cover the sensor to protect it from knocks and loosening if participating in an energetic activity.
- 8 Limit your alcohol and caffeine intake to avoid spikes in glucose levels.
- 9 Moisturize skin regularly including during colder, winter months.
- 10 Get medical attention for any heat-related illness.

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LOVE MY LIBRE



Thank you for reading this Issue of Libre Life presented by Love My Libre Ltd. We are a small family business, born from an idea by my 12-year-old son who wanted to make his mum's sensor look less like a medical device.

It was designed to be worn on the upper arm in a similar way to runners wear their phone so needed to be light weight, robust and suitable for wearing in all weathers. Comfort was also a key factor as was being able to put it on easily.

In partnership with Warwick Manufacturing Group, the armband has been further developed and tested before being brought to market.

OUR PRODUCTS

“The armband is amazing, my son plays contact rugby, spars in boxing, and plays football. The armband has protected his sensor and then some.”

Our Librebands are especially for wearing over a FreeStyle Libre and are suitable for sports, exercising, swimming and everyday wear. The current range of designs available:



SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

For more information about us, other designs and new products please visit our website and subscribe to receive a free copy of **Libre Life**.

For new subscribers who haven't yet tried a Libreband we offer a 10% discount for purchases from our website, enter SUBSCRIBE10 at checkout*.

**Applies to email subscribers only.*

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