

Issued by JPAC: 29 April 2021

Implementation: To be determined by each Service

## Change Notification UK National Blood Services No. 07 - 2021

### Diabetes Mellitus

#### These changes apply to the Whole Blood and Components Donor Selection Guidelines

Please amend the 'Additional Information' and 'Reason for change' sections in this entry:

*Additional Information:* In the UK about one in twenty individuals has diabetes. The majority of cases do not require treatment with insulin. Many people with this type of diabetes (often called type II (2)) are in good health and are fit to donate blood.

It is however important that complications due to diabetes are carefully assessed and, where necessary, donors are excluded from donating (e.g. those at risk of postural hypotension due to autonomic neuropathy, or those at risk of bacteraemia due to unhealed ulcers).

The rationale for not accepting donors on oral medication for diabetes mellitus was reviewed by the Standing Advisory Committee for the Care and Selection of Donors in 2008. It was decided that available data did not support the deferral of all individuals with diabetes that required treatment.

It is a requirement of the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations not to accept donors who are being treated with insulin, or who have received a transplant of human tissue.

Diabetic donors should be informed that blood donation will lower their HbA1c (glycated haemoglobin) levels. This blood test is used to monitor their diabetic control. Donors should inform their diabetic team that they are blood donors so this can be taken into account when reviewing HbA1c levels. Blood donation should preferably be performed after HbA1c testing.

HbA1c decreases under conditions which shorten the life-span of red blood cells (RBC). HbA1c is made when the glucose (sugar) in the body sticks to the RBC. As the body can't use the sugar properly more of it sticks to the RBC and builds up in the blood. RBC are active for around 3 months. By measuring HbA1c, clinicians are able to get an overall picture of what a patient's average blood sugar levels have been over a period of weeks/months. For people with diabetes this is important as the higher the HbA1c, the greater the risk of developing diabetes-related complications.

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*Reason for change:* ~~Information regarding injectable medication other than insulin has been added.~~  
Information about the impact of donation on HbA1c testing has been added to the Additional Information section.

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