Continuous Glucose Monitoring

The CGM Revolution

@ The Power of Prevention

CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITOR

STARTER GUIDE

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Gesa Stolting dipCNM mBANT

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WELCOME

Did you hear about these "CGMs" and want to find out more about who they are for and how to get one? Then this guide is for you, enjoy!

Hi, my name is Gesa and I am a registered Nutritional Therapist and Health Coach. I specialise in helping people asses and balance their blood sugar levels, through the use of CGMs, in order to improve their health and prevent chronic disease.

This booklet is designed to help you understand why you might consider using a CGM for a period of time and to find out how to get and use one.

Gesa Stolting dipCNM. mBant

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT MY BLOOD SUGAR?

- Tracking your blood glucose allows you to roughly track your insulin.
- Insulin levels dictate when we are storing fat or "burning" fat.
- Tightly regulated glucose (and insulin) levels help us lose weight, prevent diabetes, reduce inflammation, and prevent chronic diseases.
- Tight control of your glucose (and insulin) can also help you sleep better, lose weight, reduce pain and inflammation, and have more energy.
- A Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) puts the information and control in YOUR hands to give you more health freedom.

Blood sugar and insulin dysregulation is linked to:

- weight gain
- High blood pressure
- Cholesterol issues (Low HDL)
- High triglycerides
- PCOS
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Heart disease

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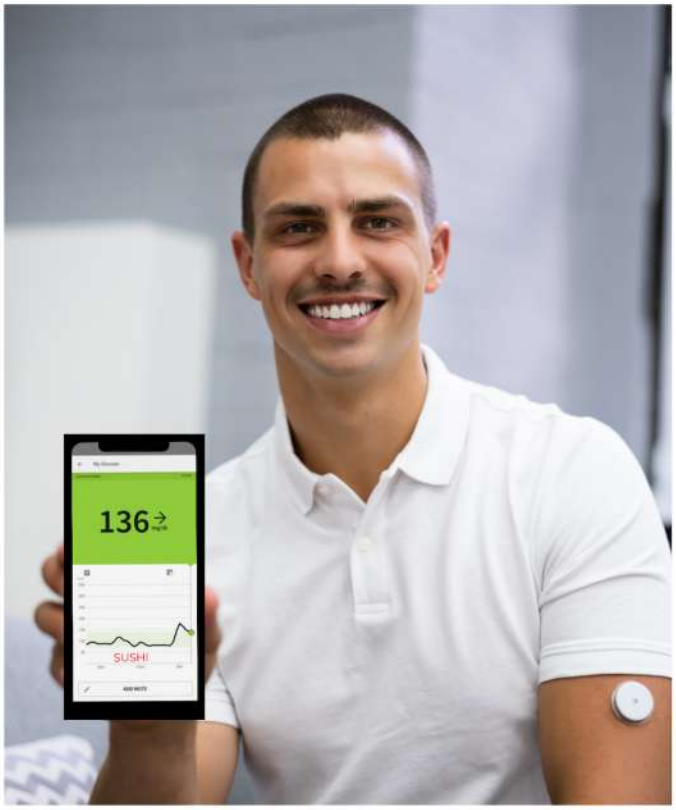
WHAT IS A CGM?

A CGM is short for "Continuous Glucose Monitor" and it is a small device/sensor that is attached to the back of the arm for 14 days at a time.

People with diabetes used to have to rely on using finger prick tests before and after meals to determine their glucose levels, but this “new” technology now allows them to track it all day and night automatically.
(It’s very cool!)



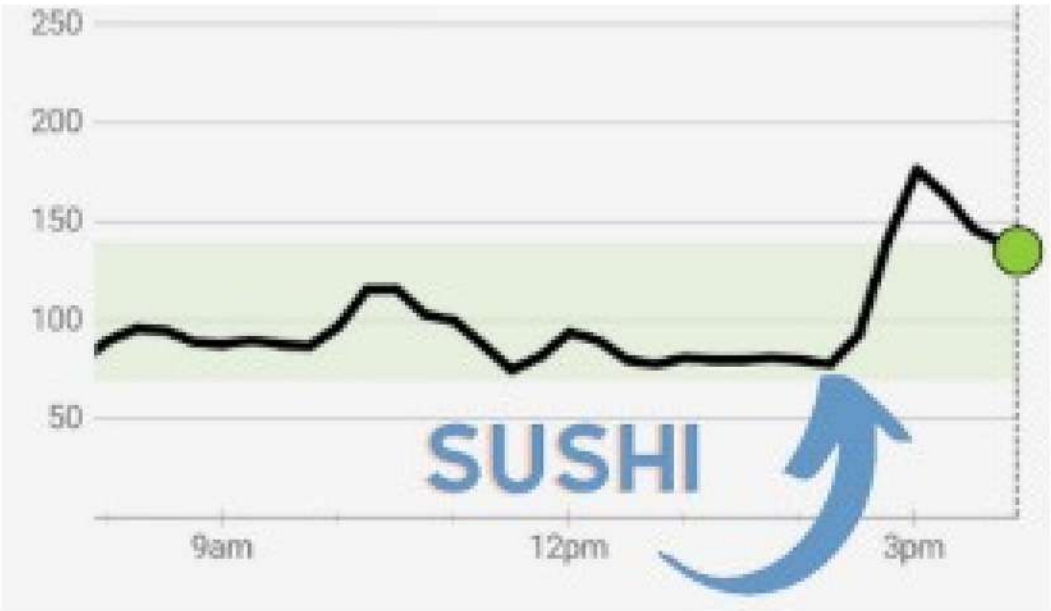
It's easy, it's fast and... it's kind of fun!

The sensor sits on your arm and transmits the data to a (free!) app on your phone. Scan your sensor with your phone anytime you want to look at your blood sugar and see how your meal, sleep, activity or stress is impacting it.

So traditionally these monitors were only used to “manage” a chronic disease, but have now thankfully found their way into the realm of “prevention” as well.

WHAT DOES A CGM TELL ME?

Imagine seeing how everything you eat and do affects your glucose levels... in real time!



A CGM tells you which meals are ideal for you and which meals are NOT. And it shows you that it is not just about food, it will also bring to light how your body reacts to stress, poor sleep, exercise and much more...

There are so many ways to tighten your glucose control. This helps you decide which works for you and how much is necessary.

This means you can stop wasting your time on strategies that don't work for you and only focus on the ones that make the biggest difference... for YOU.

Because everyone is unique.

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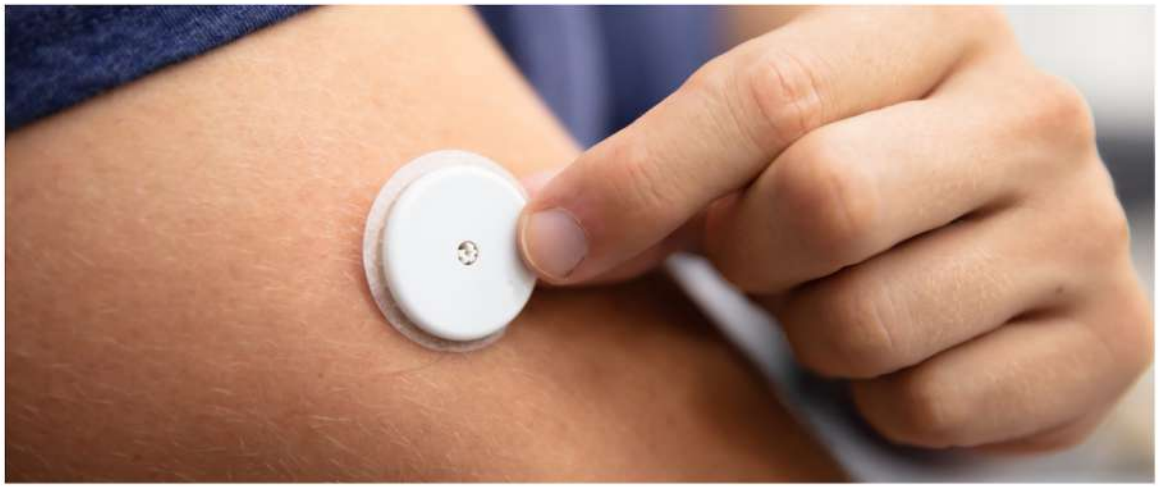
WHY USE A CGM?
(I DON'T EVEN HAVE DIABETES)

- The old way of "waiting until you have diabetes before making changes" does not work. It leads (reliably) to diabetes and metabolic syndrome.
- I work with people who are ready to take responsibility for their own health now.
- Looking at continuous glucose data over a period of 14 days can be more telling than the blood tests conventionally used (Fasting glucose, Hba1c), because it is about trends and variability, not just averages.
- A continuous glucose monitor (CGM) gives us a unique window into our metabolism to show EXACTLY what foods and lifestyle changes work the best for us. And it will highlight what other factors apart from food raise our glucose, like stress or poor sleep.
- It also acts like a "coach" on your arm... reminding you of better choices.
- People who use CGMs routinely are able to lower their blood sugar levels, and therefore their risk for diabetes and heart disease. They also tend to lose unwanted belly fat and feel much better.
- Real-time feedback helps us repeat helpful diet and lifestyle choices and get results FASTER than waiting 3 months for follow-up labs.
- A CGM puts the information and control in YOUR hands to give you more health freedom.



GAMIFICATION
DOPAMINE HITS

In his book *Atomic Habits*, author James Clear talks about the problem of some of our healthy habits. When we engage in "healthy" choices, there is no immediate pleasure or gratification. In fact, we often have to wait months for a lab result or weight loss to tell us what we did helped, and even then we're not sure exactly which habits moved the needle.

Contrast this to the "bad" choices. They often give immediate pleasure and the drawbacks aren't felt for months, if not years.

But with wearables like a CGM, we get IMMEDIATE feedback. Our brains get rewarded for doing things that are healthy (YOU WIN!) and are told immediately when a meal spiked their blood sugar (YOU LOSE!).

My clients tell me it feels like a coach on their arm 24/7 that provides not just education, but accountability and a dopamine hit! I is kind of fun!

I

So let the fun begin!

DIAGNOSING PREDIABETES

If you suspect that you have pre-diabetes, with or without wearing a CGM, please ask your GP to run some blood tests to get you a diagnosis.

I am not a medical professional and am not allowed to diagnose, but I can help you make sense of your glucose data.

Having blood tests done at the beginning of your CGM journey can be a good idea, because it gives you a baseline to compare to later on.

Pre-diabetes is diagnosed with the following labs:

- A1c: 5.7-6.4% (higher is diabetes
- Fasting glucose: 5.5-6.9mmol/l

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE WITH COMPANIES LIKE ZOE AND VERI?

Let's start with ZOE

ZOE is a great company, but in essence, if you sign up with them, you agree to be part of a large research project. There is nothing wrong with that, but if all you want is to try a CGM, then there is a much easier and cheaper way, as you will learn in this guide, without having to collect a stool sample and have a blood draw as well. There are also many exclusions in place, so people with certain condition can not join. And the support you get while you are actually wearing the CGM is limited, because they are mainly collecting your data at that point. You will get a summary report a few weeks later with recommendations about what foods work best for you, but by then your CGM has run out (it only lasts for 14 days).

Joining memberships

Then there are some great companies, like Nutrisense, Levels, Signos and Veri, that provide a CGM and usage of their software, as part of their membership. The support you get is more generic, unless you pay for extra support, like a one-to-one session with a Nutritional therapist. Some have now also started with AI support, which might work for some people.

They are great companies and joining one of them makes complete sense if you live in a country where CGMs are only available with a prescription, like the US, because they are able to by-pass the need for a prescription and mail the equipment right to their clients.

And although there are some key differences between these companies, they nearly all use the same Monitor from Abbott: the Freestyle Libre 2.

So the hardware is the same. The packing and sticker over it might be different (Some use Dexom, which more expensive)

Now for the good news

In the UK and many countries in the EU, you **DO NOT NEED A PRESCRIPTION** in order to get your hands on a CGM. You can order the monitor directly from Abbott or buy it in some pharmacies (not all are clued up that they can be sold over the counter) and then download the free Freestyle Libre app. Voila!

This is also the monitor I support in my programmes, but I do not supply the monitor, because everybody can just buy them.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

1

Buy CGM
(Pharmacy or online)
NO prescription needed

2

Download free software

3

Install sensor on your arm
(*no it does not hurt)*

4

Start scanning!
(Ideally wait 12 hours before first scan to let it calibrate)

OPTIONAL:

5

Apply a cover for extra protection

6

Join one of my programmes if you would like extra support
Or book a FREE chat with me

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WHICH CGM SHOULD YOU BUY?

It easiest and cheapest CGM to work with and get a hold of is the

Cost: £57 for 14 days

(About £4 per day, which is cheaper than a personal coach!)

Freestyle Libre 2

This is the monitor I work with and support in my programmes. And it the monitor that most companies, including ZOE, use.

Where to buy:

- a pharmacy (although not all pharmacies are clued up yet that you are allowed to buy them without a prescription
- order online directly from Abbott
- order online from 3rd party providers (Sometimes have deals, so worth shopping around)

NOTE: Abbott also sells a Freestyle Libre 3, but it is not freely availablein in the UK yet (it is in some other countries like the US). When it becomes available, I will probably switch to that one, because it is even smaller that the libre2.

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HOW DO I SCAN MY CGM?

THERE ARE 2 WAYS TO COLLECT YOUR GLUCOSE DATA FROM YOUR MONITOR:

2) A READER

(OPTIONAL: IF YOUR SMARTPHONE IS NOT COMPATIBLE)

1) SMARTPHONE

CGM data is transmitted to a FREE app on your phone so you can check your glucose levels any time.

THE SENSOR

This is your CGM. It sits on your arm and samples your glucose levels every minute.

Most people use their smart phone, because it is the most convenient way and does not cost anything, but if that is not possible, an reader can be bought separately.

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PHONE COMPATABILITY

Most people use their smartphone as a reader, because fortunately most phones are compatible.

To scan the sensor your phone needs to have
Near Field Communication (NFC).

- Can you use Apple Pay or Google Pay? Then you have NFC and can use your phone.
- Try installing the Libre2 app on your phone. If it installs, your phone is compatible!

If your smartphone is compatible, you can buy a reader.

It's a little less convenient, but it can do all the same things.
Since most of my clients use their mobile phone and it is the most convenient way, I have not include the reader set-up guide here.
Please get in touch if you would like more information about setting and using the reader.

WHAT SOFTWARE SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

- If you are using your smartphone, you'll need to install the app.
- Go to your App Store or Google Play and search for FreeStyle **LibreLink**

Make sure you get the **LIBRE 2**

- You will have to set up an account before you will be able to use it (make sure to write everything down, because you might need the log in details for other stuff later.)

And voila...now you just need to figure out how to put that amazing CGM on your arm!

APPLYING THE SENSOR 1

The kit

Before putting on your sensor you might want to take the time to get familiar with your “kit”.
Unpack everything, but do not open the sensor until you are ready actuallyto apply it.
Maybe have a read of the manual
(yes, the men too!)

Prepping the site

The sensor uses adhesive to stay on. You'll need to remove excess oil and hair from the site.

- Wash the back of your upper arm with soap and water, then thoroughly dry. Do NOT use moisturising soap or lotions.
- You can also use single use alcohol wipes, I find that easiest. Just make sure to let it dry properly.
- If the backs of your arms are very hairy, you will want to shave the area.

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APPLYING THE SENOR 2

The location

The sensor needs to go on the BACK of the arm. Not the side or the front. There are a lot of images out there (sorry, I have also used a few) that show the sensor in the wrong place.

Why is this important?

- If the sensor is on the side the risk of bumping into something is much bigger, risking the sensor to "come away" before the 14 day period is over. Once it comes loose, you can not stick it back on. (This is also the reason why getting a protection sticker is a good idea)
- If you sleep on your side and the sensor is on the side of your are, this might compress the area/sensor and result in a "pressure low". By compressing the area, not enough fluid can circulate and so the glucose reading will be lower.

If you always sleep on your back, then you might consider moving the sensor to the side a bit, but it still needs to be in the "fleshy" part of your arm (the front of the arm is not a good idea).

TIP: You could take a pen and mark the spot when your arm is hanging down, so then you know where it needs to go when you hold your arm up to apply the sensor.

NB Users have found other areas on the body that also work. The chest, abdomen and thigh are all possibilities. However, because the sensor is only approved for use in the back of the upper arm, Abbott will not replace a faulty sensor if it was installed incorrectly.

Applying the senor

The sensor kit comes in two parts:
the sensor applicator and the sensor pack.

1. Peel the lid completely off the sensor pack and unscrew the cap from the sensor applicator.

2. Attach the sensor applicator to the sensor pack.

3. Apply the sensor to your pre-cleaned section of skin on the back of your upper arm.

Abbott have a great website with videos and images. If would like to have a look there for more information, I have linked the image below to their "first user webpage.

And don't worry, it does not hurt, just a little "sting", nothing you can't handle. (Even a friend of mine who was panicking when she saw the applicator, agreed that is was fine once she had done it.

NEARLY THERE! GOOD LUCK!

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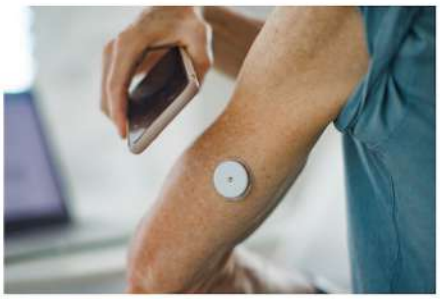
READY STEADY...SCAN!!

TOP TIP: Wait at least 12, if not 24, hours before you scan your sensor for the first time!

(Don't worry, the count down does not being until you do your first scan)



Your sensor needs time to "calibrate" and get used to your body. In my experience scanning the sensor straight away or too soon, results in very low readings (often false) which can cause a bit of panic in the first time user.

You scan the sensor with the **BACK of your phone** (just like with apple pay etc).

Your sensor can **store 8 hours of data**.
So for the best results, scan:

- When you first wake up
- At bedtime
- Before meals (important for logging)
- Before and after exercise
- Anytime you are curious about your blood sugar.

Remember that even without scanning, the glucose gets sampled and the data stored on your sensor.
As long as you scan or connect once every 8 hours, you can look back at your data.
NB There has been a change to the way the Libre 2 works and it now collects the data automatically as long as you have your bluetooth on (this is not what it says in the manuals yet).

ABBOTT WEBSITE

Abbott has a great website with loads of information on the use and application of their CGMs. And their customer service is also great, so don't hesitate to reach out to them when you have questions about:

- Equipment not functioning as expected.
- Replacement for faulty equipment
- Getting a new sensor when the current one has fallen off before the end of the 14 day period (They are very good at replacing without a fuss).
- Or how any of their products work.

They have loads of resources, including videos, so go have a brows!

Freestyle Website

Click here

Or just google Freestyle Libre...they are not hard to find!

A note on the "FREE TRIALS": these are only available to people who have been diagnosed with diabetes.

LEARN MORE

So that's it! I hope you found this guide useful and I wish you a wonderful health journey!

For more information you can visit my website.

www.theCGMrevolution.co.uk

And maybe see you on one of my programme (or 1to1) if you want a group experience or need more support!

CGM Discovery Programme

CGM Glucose Mastery Programme

For more details on my programmes & upcoming events, have a look on my website