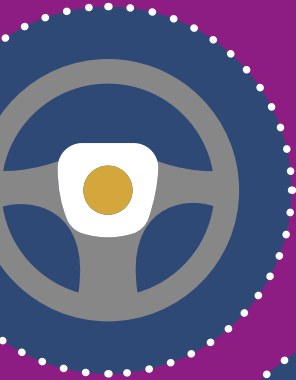


Learning to drive and driving safely with Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education;
supporting young people and young adults living with
Type 1 diabetes



Learning to drive is exciting and can feel a bit scary!

Whether you are counting down the days until your 17th birthday and your first driving lesson, or have been driving for a while, this booklet can help you learn what you'll need to do to ensure you are safe on the road.

There are thousands of people with Type 1 diabetes driving safely every day across the UK and with some careful planning, there is nothing to stop you from joining them. Having that freedom comes with responsibility, and you are responsible for keeping up to date with driving rules.

This booklet covers key points in relation to driving safely with Type 1 diabetes.



There is step by step guidance on learning to drive available from the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) through www.gov.uk.

Before getting behind the wheel, you will need to:

Meet the standards of vision for driving

This applies to everyone – you must be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses if necessary) a car number plate, made after 1 September 2001, from 20 meters.

Looking after your eyesight is an important part of living with Type 1 diabetes and if you require treatment or develop problems with your eyes, you'll need to tell the DVLA. This doesn't include being short sighted, long sighted or colour blind, but you must wear your glasses/contact lenses each time you drive in order to meet the standards.

Apply for a provisional driving licence

If you're applying for your first provisional driving licence for a moped, motorbike or car you do this from DVLA online. You need to be at least 15 years and 9 months old.

Tell the DVLA that you live with Type 1 diabetes

You do this when you apply for a driving licence by completing a DIAB1 form that asks for specific information relating to your condition and how you manage it.



There is a YouTube video that can help you complete the DIAB1 form.

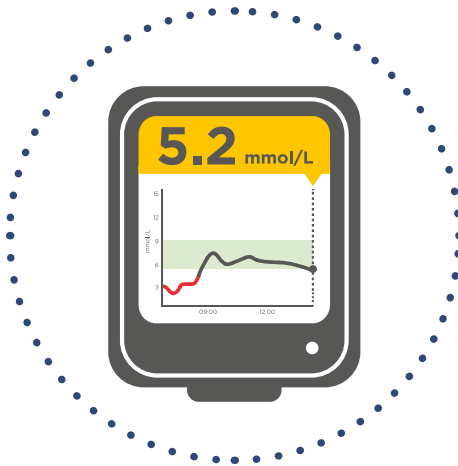
www.youtube.com/watch?v=umzsP7CNhFQ



Be responsible in how you manage your health

Developing a good routine where you take responsibility for your health (like regularly checking your blood glucose, taking your insulin and attending appointments) is important to ensure you can live independently and do all the things you want to do.

There is an additional responsibility when you get behind the wheel of a vehicle as you are required (by law) to be safe to drive. (see page 6).



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Learning to drive helped me get to grips with Type 1 diabetes and checking my bloods more often. I had to show I was responsible because it's not just about you, it's everyone on the road too.

George, living with Type 1 diabetes



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Where I live is rural, you can get a provisional licence for a tractor at 16, but you can't drive on the road until you've passed your tractor test.

Hywel, living with Type 1 diabetes

If you are issued with a licence

You will be issued a licence for one, two or three years, depending on your individual circumstances.

Each time your licence is due to expire, the DVLA will contact you and you'll need to update them on your current health by completing the forms you are sent.

A few additional points:

- It's free of charge
- You don't have to re-sit your driving test
- You will be given enough time to respond and get a new licence before your old one runs out
- Be proactive – send the forms back as soon as possible so you don't risk being left without a valid driving licence while you wait for your new one
- They may ask for additional information – from you or your doctor
- You may need to have additional tests like a visual fields test



You risk being fined up to £1000 by not declaring your medical condition to the DVLA and it can result in prosecution if you were to be involved in an accident.

Staying safe on the road

To ensure your safety, and the safety of others, you are advised to:

- Keep hypo treatment with you at all times. Take it on your driving lessons and if you've got a car, store some in a compartment that's within easy reach
- Always carry your meter and blood glucose strips with you, even if you use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) or a flash glucose monitoring device. (see page 7)
- Check your blood glucose before you drive
- On longer journeys stop to check your blood glucose every 2 hours
- Check more often if you've been exercising or if you have altered your regular routine
- Wear/carry medical ID – on phone, in wallet or wear a medical alert band/necklace
- If your blood glucose is **below 4.0mmol/l** or **you feel hypo, do not drive**
- If your blood glucose is **5mmol/l or below but above 4mmol/l** then **take some glucose or a carbohydrate snack**



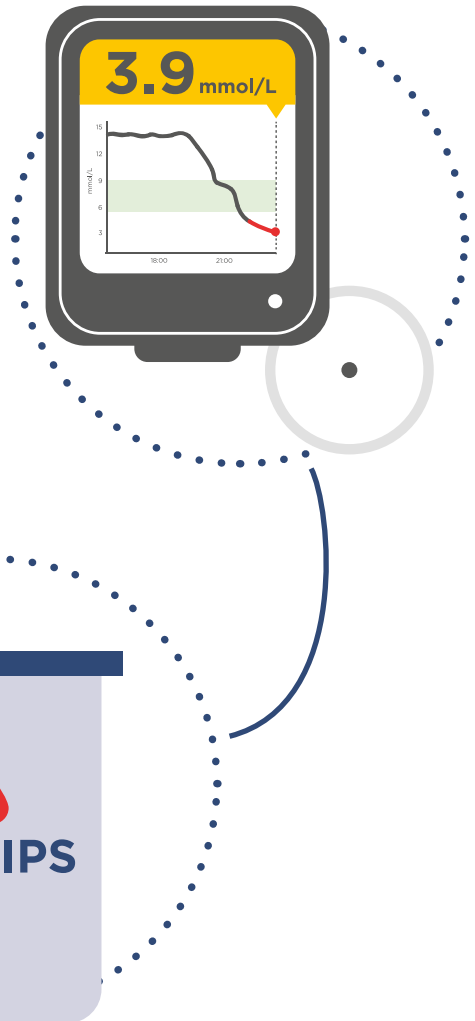
Important information for CGM or flash glucose monitoring users

CGM and flash glucose monitoring has made checking blood glucose easier and more convenient than ever before, but it's still illegal to use your meter or mobile phone to check when driving. Make sure you have pulled over safely to do this each and every time.

There will be times where you will need to confirm your blood glucose level using a finger prick check.

These include:

- If your blood glucose level is 4.0mmol/l or below
- If you have symptoms of a hypo or know that you are/ could be going low
- If your symptoms don't match the reading on your CGM or flash glucose meter



If you feel hypo whilst driving

If ever you feel low/hypo behind the wheel – you should pull over and stop driving.

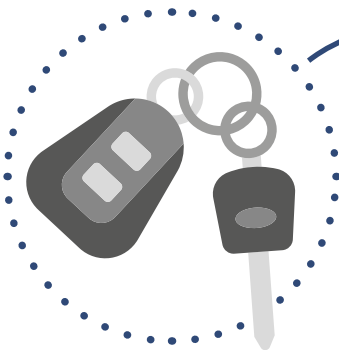
You can still be considered to be in control of a vehicle from the driver's seat, even if you aren't driving, so it's recommended you:

- Switch off the engine
- Remove your keys from the ignition
- Remove yourself from the driver's seat (make sure it is safe for you to do so)
- Treat your hypo with fast acting carbohydrate as you normally would
- Wait 45 minutes after your blood glucose returns to normal before driving again. Driving needs a lot of mental concentration and it can take some time for your body and mind to fully recover

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Avoid the temptation to continue driving no matter how close you are to your destination. It is never worth risking your safety, or your licence.

Jack, living with Type 1 diabetes



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Even if treating a hypo means you will be late, don't risk putting you or others in danger. Call ahead to explain, or let someone know when you arrive.

Efa, living with Type 1 diabetes

Passing your test

Firstly, congratulations!

Passing your test is a big step towards independence.

It also means you become responsible for keeping yourself, and any passengers in the car, safe at all times – make sure you understand your responsibilities as a driver with Type 1 diabetes and keep these in check!

Telling your insurance company

You will need to tell (or update) your insurance company that you live with Type 1 diabetes, even if you aren't prompted to do so when you apply.

If you don't tell them, it can mean your insurance is void and you may not be covered.

You may have to pay more for your car insurance as needing to renew your licence every 1-3 years puts you in a higher risk category on some policies.

Shop around the different companies or ask your provider if you can get a cheaper quote but always be honest about your health.



Drive-thru carb count!

If you or friends get their licences, you may start to spend more time out and about in cars, visiting drive-thru restaurants or eating at different times of the day than you normally would.

Remember you'll need to manage these carbs with changes to your diabetes regime. Talk these through with your diabetes team if you need advice on this.

Making space to take care of your health, including your diabetes and your vision will help you get your licence and keep it for as long as possible.

It is your responsibility to make sure you keep up to date with:

- Your diabetes clinic appointments
- Your diabetes education
- Your annual review and retinopathy screening
- Your eye health (as checked by your optician)
- Informing the DVLA of any relevant changes
- Any changes in the law that affect people living with Type 1 diabetes and driving

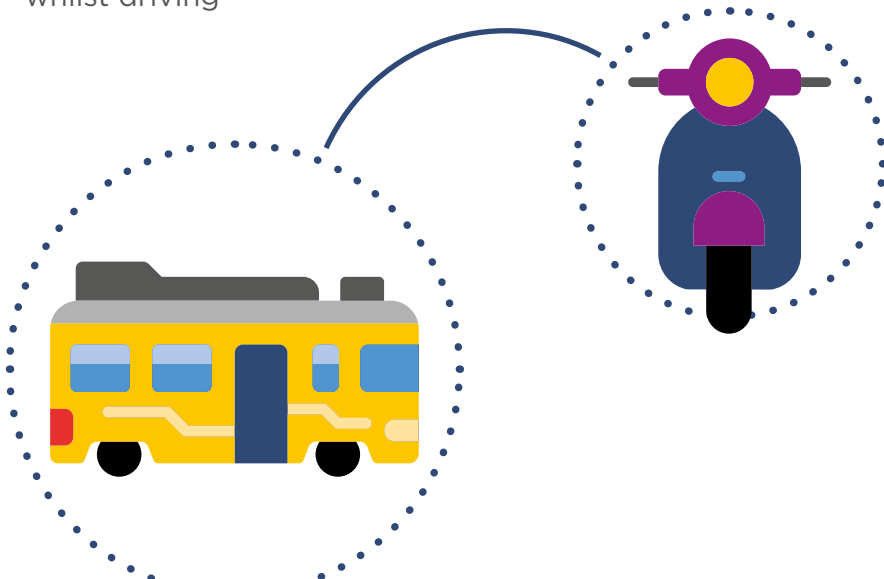


As diabetes technology develops over time, you will need to ensure that the equipment you use is officially recognised by the DVLA or you could be caught out.

Contacting the DVLA

There are other times when you will need to contact the DVLA which include:

- If you drive a car or motorcycle and have had more than one severe hypo (where someone else has had to help you) while awake in the last 12 months
- If you drive buses, coaches or lorries and have had one severe hypo where you needed the help of someone else, even if you were asleep
- If you lose your ability to recognise your low blood glucose or hypo symptoms, which is sometimes referred to as having 'impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia'
- If you have a severe hypo whilst driving
- If you have had laser treatment, or have a visual impairment on both of your eyes
- For people with one functioning eye, this applies to you if you receive laser treatment or have a visual impairment in your fully functioning eye
- If you develop conditions which require an adapted vehicle like an automatic or hand operated accelerator or brake
- If you develop any condition that may affect your ability to drive safely



Driving under the influence

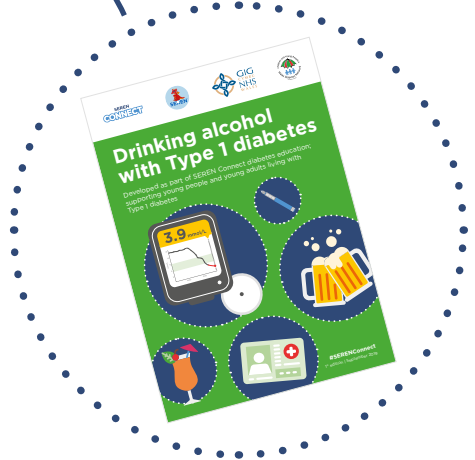
It is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol and recreational drugs.

There are strict alcohol limits for drivers but it's impossible to say how many drinks this equals – it's different for each person. There are also strict penalties if you're caught. The best way to be certain that you are safe to drive is to not drink any alcohol.



Find out more about alcohol in **SEREN Connect's Drinking alcohol with Type 1 diabetes booklet.**

Some medications also have driving restrictions as they can affect your ability to drive. So always consult your doctor, about the suitability of any prescription drugs and driving, if you aren't sure.



If you want more information you can go to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) website:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency