



# Safety Flash

March 2022



## Can you tell the difference?

Increasing numbers of people, especially those with type 1 diabetes, are using wearable diabetes technology. It is important to be able to distinguish between the 2 main types of technology people use:

- ⇒ **Insulin pumps** deliver a constant infusion of rapid acting insulin via a cannula under the skin. There are 2 main types of insulin pump:
  - ◆ Patch pumps, where the cannula is integral to the pump unit. These are controlled by a separate handset. **There is a risk these can be confused with continuous glucose monitors.**
  - ◆ Tethered pumps, where the pump unit is connected to the cannula via tubing.
- ⇒ **Continuous glucose monitors**, which give continuous glucose readings from measurements taken from a subcutaneous sensor. **There is a risk these can be confused with patch pumps.**

If a person with diabetes, particularly type 1 diabetes, is admitted to hospital - ask if they use any wearable diabetes technology. If they are unconscious, make sure you check them for wearable diabetes technology – usually worn on the arm or the abdomen but sometimes the thighs or buttocks.

**If hypoglycaemia is present and the person is unconscious** remove any device which may be administering insulin – if you are unsure of the device consider removing it as this is the safest option

- ⇒ If removing an insulin pump there is a risk of DKA unless insulin is administered in another way (e.g. variable rate intravenous insulin infusion)

**If hyperglycaemia is present and the person is unconscious** insulin delivery may have been interrupted and there is a risk of DKA. Alternative insulin delivery needs to be considered

**Don't discard any devices that are removed as they are expensive and may be needed again**

For further information on managing insulin pumps in people admitted to hospital, click [here](#). If in doubt, please ask your local diabetes team for help

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