

Diabetes Education Promotes Self-care



Diabetes Service

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Diabetes Tablets



Information you should know about the tablets used to treat
Type 2 Diabetes

- Types and action of tablets
- Possible side effects
- Causes, symptoms and treatment of hypoglycaemia

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Starting Tablets

If healthy eating and increased physical activity have not been sufficient to lower your blood glucose levels, then tablets will also be required.

You should...

- Learn the names and doses of tablets prescribed for you
- Know how many tablets and when to take them
- Take your tablets as prescribed every day
- Get another prescription from your Doctor before your tablets are finished



There are several different types of tablets available to treat Diabetes

Once you have treated your hypo always ask yourself “why did this happen?”

- Did I go too long without eating?
- Did I do more physical activity than usual?
- Have I been drinking alcohol without food?

If your hypos are happening frequently and you cannot find a cause see your health care team for advice. (Your medications may need to be reviewed)

If you are on tablets that can cause hypos or your Diabetes is not well controlled, it is advisable to learn how to monitor your blood glucose levels at home.

Checking Blood Glucose levels

Self-monitoring your blood glucose levels enables you to see how well your body is responding to your food plan, physical activity and diabetes tablets.

We recommend that you test your blood glucose levels 2 days per week:-

before breakfast

before the evening meal and

2 hours after the evening meal

The goal is to keep your blood glucose levels as close to the normal range as possible (4-7mmol/L before meals)

Keeping a record of your blood glucose levels enables you and your Doctor or Diabetes Nurse Educator to see whether your diabetes is being adequately controlled.

Remember to take your blood glucose record book with you each time you visit your Doctor or clinic.

Treatment of Hypos

Glucose is best. Take either:

2 heaped teaspoons glucose powder in water **or**
3-4 Dextro Energy tablets **or**
3-4 Vita Glucose tablets



If you have no glucose take :

1 tablespoon of jam, **or** honey **or** sugar
1/2 glass of ordinary lemonade **or**
8-10 jelly beans



If you feel no better within 5-10 minutes OR your blood glucose is still less than 4, repeat one of the above options again. Recheck every 5-10 minutes until your blood glucose is above 4 mmol/L

When your blood glucose is above 4, follow this with either a meal if it is due, *or* a snack such as:

- A thin slice of bread **or**
- A glass of milk **or**
- 2 or 3 cracker biscuits **or**
- Small pottle of yoghurt **or**
- Small raw fruit

Metformin

Also known as

Metomin, Glucophage, Glucomet, Apo-Metforin and 3M Metformin

These tablets should be taken with or immediately after food

Metformin prevents the release of too much glucose into the blood from the body's store of glucose held in the liver.

It is weight neutral which means you are less likely to put on weight. (Gaining weight makes your body more resistant to the action of insulin.)

Metformin does not cause blood glucose levels to drop too low (hypoglycaemia) when used alone.

Possible Side Effects

Metformin is generally well tolerated but in some people these tablets may cause diarrhoea or an upset stomach.

Starting with a low dose and building up gradually reduces these effects. If these symptoms persist tell your Doctor, you may need a change of tablet

If you are unwell, not eating, vomiting or have diarrhoea, do not take Metformin until you are well and eating again.

Alpha Glucosidase Inhibitors

Also known as Acarbose or Glucobay

These tablets should be taken with the first bite of the meal.

Acarbose delays the breakdown and absorption of carbohydrate foods from the stomach, and therefore reduce the rise in blood glucose levels after a meal.

These tablets do not cause the blood glucose level to drop too low (hypoglycaemia) or cause weight gain.

Possible Side Effects

Wind (flatulence), bloating or diarrhoea. To minimise these side effects it is best to start with a low dose and build up gradually.



Hypoglycaemia (Hypo)

How you might feel when your blood glucose is too low
It happens suddenly

Blurred vision

Pins & needles on the lips or tongue

Hungry

Look pale and have sweaty skin

Thumping heart



Headache

Light-headed

Dizzy

Trembling hands

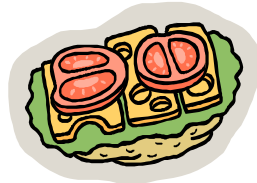
Weak and trembling knees

Sometimes feel confused, anxious or irritable

You may have some or all of these symptoms

Causes of Hypoglycaemia

1.
Missing a meal or snack
Being late for a meal or snack, or not eating enough carbohydrate (starchy) foods.



2.
More physical activity than usual without extra carbohydrate foods to top up.



3.
Too many diabetes tablets.



4.
Drinking alcohol without food.



Insulin Sensitizers

Actos (Pioglitazone)*

Avandia (Rosiglitazone)**

These tablets may be taken with or without food

Actos and Avandia improve insulin sensitivity — decreasing the body's resistance to insulin. This means the muscles and other body tissues respond better to the action of insulin, and can use or store glucose more efficiently.

These tablets do not cause hypoglycaemia

Possible Side Effects

Initial weight gain, fluid retention (mild)

* Available on special authority only

** Available but not currently funded in NZ

Sulphonylureas

Gliclazide also known as Diamicon

Glipizide also known as Glipid

Glibenclamide also known as Gliben or Daonil

Tolbutamide also known as Diatol

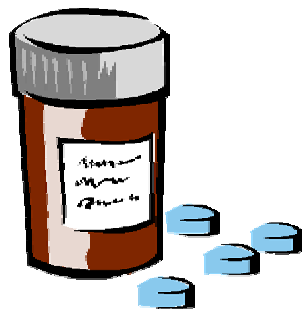
These tablets should be taken just before or with a meal.

They work by stimulating the pancreas to produce more insulin.

Sometimes these tablets can cause the blood glucose level to drop too low.

A blood glucose level less than 4mmol/L is too low
This is caused hypoglycaemia or a hypo.

Please make sure you read and understand the following information on hypos.
It is very important.....



Remember...

The treatment of your diabetes is to balance:-

- Food which raises blood glucose
- Physical activity which normally lowers blood glucose
- Your tablets which will also lower blood glucose



The aim is to keep your blood glucose level as close to normal as possible

If your blood glucose level drops below 4mmol/L, the balance has been upset and you may feel unwell.

A blood glucose level less than 4 is too low. It must be treated immediately as you can become unconscious from a hypo.

It is important to know:-

- Why hypos happen (causes)
- How you might feel when your blood glucose is too low
- How to treat a hypo