

Oral Diabetes Medicines



Why do you need to learn about your diabetes medication?

- ◆ You must understand how your medicine works to more easily balance it with food and activity to control your diabetes.
- ◆ You need to know when and how to take your diabetes medication.
- ◆ Since some diabetes medicines work to lower your blood glucose, you may be at risk for hypoglycemia (low blood glucose).

What to know about diabetes pills

- You must still follow a food and exercise plan.
- Diabetes pills are not insulin. Each type of pill helps lower blood sugar differently.
- Take diabetes pills at the same time each day, unless your doctor tells you not to.
- Learn the possible side effects of diabetes pills. Know the signs and learn how to treat hypoglycemia (low blood glucose).

Diabetes pills will be from one of these groups

These may cause hypoglycemia. Always carry a fast-acting form of carbohydrate with you.



- **Sulfonylureas** cause the pancreas to produce more insulin. This class of oral medications include:
 - Micronase, DiaBeta, and Glucotrol
 - Glucotrol XL - taken only once a day
 - Amaryl - taken only once a day
- **Meglitinides** stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin. These medications should be taken no more than 30 minutes before each meal. This group includes:
 - Repaglinide (Prandin)
 - Neteglinide (Starlix)
- **Combination Drugs** Glucovance (metformin HCl tablets) is a combination of Glyburide and Metformin.

These drugs alone will NOT cause hypoglycemia.

- **Biguanides** Glucophage (Metformin) decrease the glucose released by the liver as its main action. It may cause intestinal disturbances such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal bloating. Usually this will subside in a few weeks. The dose may need to be lowered temporarily.
- **Alpha-Glycosidase Inhibitors** slow the digestion of carbohydrates in the intestine so the peak in blood glucose after meals is not as high. These medications must be taken with the first bite of the meal and may cause abdominal pain, diarrhea and gas. This class of oral medications include:
 - Precose (Acarbose)
 - Glycet (Miglitol)
- **Thiazolidinediones** help the muscle cells respond to insulin and use glucose more effectively. Your physician should occasionally check your liver function when you take this medication. This class of oral medications include:
 - Actos (Pioglitazone HCL)
 - Avandia (Rosiglitazone Maleate)



Your doctor may ask you to take more than one diabetes medicine at a time. Some diabetes medicines that lower blood sugar work well together.

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