

Oral Diabetes Medications

Keeping blood glucose (sugar) levels close to normal is the main goal in managing diabetes. People who have diabetes need to follow an individualized meal plan (check with your doctor for a referral to a dietitian) and do regular physical activity. If blood glucose levels are still higher than recommended, your doctor may decide you need oral diabetes medications. Your doctor will decide which medication is best for you. Oral diabetes medications only work in people whose bodies still make some insulin. Diabetes medications that are taken by mouth are NOT insulin and are not a substitute for insulin.

Types of Oral Medications

There are several types of oral diabetes medications and they work in different ways. Many people with type 2 diabetes take more than one type.

Sulfonylureas: Stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin.

Biguanides: Decrease the amount of glucose made by the liver.

Thiazolidinediones: Help muscle cells use the insulin your body makes.

Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors: Slow the digestion of carbohydrates.

Meglitinides: Stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin after meals.

If You Take Oral Diabetes Medications

- Know the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and how to treat it.
- Check your blood glucose levels each day.
- Know the following about your medication(s):
 - ✓ The name of each medication and how it works.
 - ✓ How much medication to take and when to take it.
 - ✓ The side effects of the medication(s).
- Ask your doctor what to do if you are sick and can't eat.
- Know when to call your doctor.



The following is not intended to be a complete description of each medication. Check with your physician or pharmacist if you have questions about your medications.

Drug Type and Names	Common Side Effects
Sulfonylureas DiaBeta, Diabinese, Micronase, Glynase, Glucotrol, Glucotrol XL, Amaryl Generic: glyburide, glipizide, glimepiride, chlorpropamide	Hypoglycemia, upset stomach, skin rash/itching, and weight gain, and sun sensitivity.
Biguanide Glucophage, Glucophage XR Generic: metformin	Nausea, diarrhea, and stomach upset that usually go away with time.
Thiazolidinediones (TZDs) Actos, Avandia	Headache, flu-like symptoms, weight gain and fluid retention.
Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors Precose, Glyset	Gas, bloating, and diarrhea that usually go away with time.
Meglitinides Starlix, Prandin	Hypoglycemia, cold symptoms, back pain, headache, and diarrhea.
Combination medications Glucovance (metformin and glyburide) Metaglip (metformin and glipizide) Avandamet (Avandia and metformin)	See individual side effects for: Glucophage (metformin), glyburide and Avandia.

Where to learn more?

Visit our website: www.dagc.org and our Aronoff Library and Resource Center, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

 <p>DIABETES ASSOCIATION OF GREATER CLEVELAND <i>Fighting the diabetes epidemic right here at home</i></p>	<p>3601 S. Green Road, #100 Cleveland, Ohio 44122</p> <p>Phone: (216) 591-0800 Fax: (216) 591-0320</p> <p>Email: information@dagc.org</p>
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