

Medication for type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is managed using a combination of eating well, physical activity and medication. Diabetes medications can be given as a tablet or an injection.

The use of medication as soon as it is needed reduces the risk of developing complications caused by diabetes. Together you and your doctor will choose the best medications for you.

How can I be 'medicine-wise'?

Managing your diabetes medications can be a challenge, but the tips below will help you avoid unwanted drug interactions and side effects.

- > Record details of your medications on a list, including why you are using them.
- > Read the consumer medicine information from your pharmacy and keep this information handy.
- > Know the name of each medication, and what it looks like.
- > Only take the dose prescribed by your doctor.
- > Take the medication at the prescribed time and ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you miss a dose accidentally.
- > If you have side effects talk to your doctor before stopping or changing the dose.
- > Store your medication in the original container away from heat and damp conditions or direct sunlight.
- > Do not store medication in the bathroom or near a sink and do not leave it in your car.
- > Always keep out of reach of children.
- > Take out-of-date or unused medication to the pharmacy for safe disposal.
- > If you intend becoming pregnant you should discuss this with your doctor.
- > Discuss any problems with your doctor, credentialed diabetes educator or pharmacist.

What if I am taking a few medications?

People with type 2 diabetes often take other medications to help manage blood pressure, cholesterol or other conditions.

It is important to tell your health professional about all the medication you are taking - including prescription, over the counter and complementary medicines (herbal, 'natural', vitamins and minerals) - as they may interact with diabetes medicines and affect your blood glucose levels.

What help is available?

There are a number of **Medication Organisers** - such as ones you can fill yourself each day or week, or blister packs (eg Webster™ packs) filled by the pharmacist for a small fee. This may help you to separate your medication into the times and days you need to take them. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

A **Review** by your doctor is needed to discuss any side effects or problems you might be having and to decide if your dose needs to be changed, a different medication is needed or if a medication should be stopped.

When starting a new medication, it is important to see your doctor when it is recommended and when you have concerns of your own. Your medications should also be reviewed as part of your diabetes **Annual Cycle of Care**.

A **Home Medicine Review** involves your doctor and an accredited pharmacist and may be useful to help you avoid problems with your medication.

There are also **Self-care Activities** that you may need to learn. Some of these include:

- > testing blood glucose levels
- > what to do if the blood glucose goes too high (Sick Day Action Plan)
- > what to do if the blood glucose level goes too low (Hypoglycaemia 'Hypo' Action Plan)
- > what to do if unwell (Sick Day Action Plan).

My medication list

Medication name	Use for	Strength	Dose	Start dose	Review date
<i>Example:</i> Metformin	type 2 diabetes	500mg	1 tablet morning and night	12/08/2017	12/08/2018

This factsheet only provides brief information about diabetes medications.

Ask your health professional to download the Consumer Medicines Information for your medications or go to <https://www.nps.org.au/medical-info/medicine-finder>.

For more information

CHSA Diabetes Service
Country Health SA LHN
 PO Box 287, Rundle Mall
 ADELAIDE SA 5000
 Telephone: (08) 8226 7168
www.chsa-diabetes.org.au



Types of diabetes medications

Diabetes medications work in different ways and vary in dose, strength and side effects. The most common ones are listed below.

Type	Things to look for	What to do
Metformin helps the body use insulin better and reduces the amount of glucose produced from the liver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > nausea > diarrhoea > stomach cramps > decreased appetite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > take during or at the end of a meal to avoid stomach upsets > talk to your doctor about any side effects
Sulphonylureas increase the amount of insulin made by the pancreas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > low blood glucose (hypoglycaemia) > alcohol may increase risk of hypoglycaemia > slight weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > talk to your doctor and health professional about side effects, weight management and alcohol
Gliptins (DPP4 Inhibitors) increase the amount of insulin in the blood and reduce the amount of glucose produced by the liver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > dizziness, headaches > respiratory infections, cold like symptoms > urinary tract infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > talk to your doctor about any side effects
Incretin Mimetics (GLP1) increase the amount of insulin in the blood, slows emptying of the stomach and reduces the amount of glucose produced by the liver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea and heartburn, stomach pain > headaches, dizziness and feeling jittery > decreased appetite > modest weight loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > tablet, twice daily injection or weekly injection > twice daily injection to be given within 1 hour before the meal > talk to you doctor about any side effects
Acarbose slows the absorption of certain carbohydrate foods and rate of glucose entering the bloodstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > abdominal pain > diarrhoea > flatulence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > if at risk of low blood glucose from other diabetes medication you must use a glucose product to treat hypo > talk to you doctor about side effects
Glitazones increase the effect of insulin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > excess fluid > weight gain > increased risk bone fractures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > if you notice any swelling (oedema) tell your doctor straight away
Sodium Glucose Cotransporter-2) Inhibitors (SGLT-2) lowers blood glucose by passing excess glucose in the urine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > genital infections > back pain > changes in cholesterol > headache, sore throat > diarrhoea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > low blood glucose may be worse if taking another diabetes medication > talk to your doctor about side effects > refer to SGLT2 factsheet
Insulin supplements your own insulin when you can no longer make enough of your own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > low blood glucose > weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > take the injection when prescribed as not all insulins have the same action > talk to your doctor and health professional about side effects, weight management and alcohol ₃