

# Diabetes Medications

**Drug Class:** Sulfonylurea

**Drug names:** **Glipizide** (*Glucotrol®*, *Glucotrol® XL*), **Glyburide** (*Micronase®*, *Glynase®*, *Diabeta®*), **Glimepiride** (*Amaryl®*)

**How does it work?** ↑ insulin secretion from the pancreas

**How is it best taken?**

- Most are taken before meals

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Mild headache
- Dizziness
- Rash
- Mild weight gain

**Drug Class:** Biguanide

**Drug names:** **Metformin** (*Glucophage®*)

**How does it work?** ↓ sugar production from the liver and ↓ insulin resistance

**How is it best taken?**

- Can be taken with or without food - take with food if it causes an upset stomach

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Stomach upset (nausea, diarrhea)
- Loss of appetite
- Metallic taste
- Mild weight loss
- Do not take with excessive alcohol

**Drug Class:** Thiazolidinedione

**Drug names:** Rosiglitazone (*Avandia®*), Pioglitazone (*Actos®*)

**How does it work?** This medication works in the muscles to help your body use insulin

**How is it best taken?**

- Take at the same time every day - can be taken with or without food but take with food if it causes an upset stomach

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Headache
- Nausea
- Mild weight gain
- Swelling

\*\*Avandia is not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Drug Class:** Dipeptidyl Peptidase IV Inhibitor

**Drug name:** sitagliptin (*Januvia®*), saxagliptin (*Onglyza®*)

**How does it work?** Helps increase insulin production; stops the liver from making too much glucose

**How is it best taken?**

- Take at the same every day - can be taken with or without food, but take with food if it causes an upset stomach

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Headache
- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Upset stomach

\*\*Not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Drug Class:** Meglitinide

**Drug names:** Repaglinide (*Prandin®*), Nateglinide (*Starlix®*)

**How does it work?** ↑ insulin secretion from the pancreas

**How is it best taken?**

- Take 15-30 minutes before meals

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Nausea, vomiting
- Mild weight gain
- Headache

\*\*Starlix is not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Drug Class:** Amylin analog

**Drug name:** Pramlintide (*Symmlin®*)

**How does it work?** Stops the liver from making too much glucose; slows the release of food from the stomach

**How is it best taken?**

- Inject just before or after mealtime insulin

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Nausea → weight loss
- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)

\*\*Not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Drug Class:**  $\alpha$ -glucosidase inhibitor

**Drug names:** Acarbose (*Precose*®), Miglitol (*Glyset*®)

**How does it work?** Slows digestion of sugar in the GI tract

**How is it best taken?**

- Take with the first bite of each meal

**What are some possible side effects?**

- GI upset (diarrhea, gas, belly pain)
- ↓ Iron absorption

\*\*Not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Drug Class:** Incretin mimetic

**Drug names:** Exenatide (*Byetta*®), liraglutide (*Victoza*®)

**How does it work?** Signals insulin production; stops the liver from making too much glucose; slows release of food from the stomach

**How is it best taken?**

- **Byetta**®: Inject 1 hour before morning and evening meals
- **Victoza**®: Can be taken anytime

**What are some possible side effects?**

- Nausea → weight loss
- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)

\*\*Victoza is not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

### Drug Class: Insulin

**How does it work?** Insulin helps cells take in sugar

**Rapid-acting:** *Humalog*®, *Novolog*®

**How is it best taken?**

- Inject just before eating a meal

**Short-acting (“regular”):**  
*Humulin*® R, *Novolin*® R

**How is it best taken?**

- Inject 30 minutes before meals

\*\**Humalog*® and *Humulin*®R are not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Intermediate-acting (NPH):**  
*Humulin*® N, *Novolin*® N

**How is it best taken?**

- Inject 30-60 minutes before meals

\*\* *Humulin*® N is not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**Long-acting:** *Lantus*®, *Levemir*®

**How is it best taken?**

- *Lantus*® → Inject once daily at bedtime, lasts approximately 24 hours
- *Levemir*® → Inject once or twice daily, duration of action depends upon dose (bigger doses last longer)

\*\**Levemir*® is not available at FDL pharmacies\*\*

**What are some possible side effects?** Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)

This is a summary of general information. Specific details about individual drugs may be important for you to know. Talk to your healthcare providers for more information.