

# Diabetes Medication

You should know if you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes. If you have type 1, you must take insulin. If you have type 2, you may take a pill instead of or along with insulin.

Below is a list of the common drugs used to control diabetes, how they work and the common side effects.

It is important to know the name of the diabetes drug you are taking

and any of the likely side effects. You should report side effects to your doctor, nurse or diabetes educator. Look at your insulin or pill bottle to see what drug you are taking.

*Compiled by Debbie G. Moore, MSN, RN, CDE, senior clinical director, clinical operations, American Healthways, Nashville, TN.*

INSULIN											
<b>How it works</b>	Insulin lowers blood glucose (blood sugar). There are many different types of insulins. They differ based on onset (when the insulin begins to work), peak (when it is working the hardest), and duration of action (how long it works).										
<b>Examples</b>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Quick-acting insulins</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humalog (insulin lispro)</li> <li>Novolog (insulin aspart)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Short-acting insulin</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin R</li> <li>Novolin R</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slow-acting insulins</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin N (NPH)</li> <li>Novolin N (NPH)</li> <li>Humulin L (lente)</li> <li>Novolin L (lente)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long-acting insulins</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin U (ultralente)</li> <li>Lantus (insulin glargine)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixtures (2 insulins are pre-mixed)</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin 50/50</li> <li>Humulin 70/30</li> <li>Humalog Mix 75/25</li> <li>Novolin 70/30</li> <li>Novolog Mix 70/30</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	Quick-acting insulins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humalog (insulin lispro)</li> <li>Novolog (insulin aspart)</li> </ul>	Short-acting insulin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin R</li> <li>Novolin R</li> </ul>	Slow-acting insulins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin N (NPH)</li> <li>Novolin N (NPH)</li> <li>Humulin L (lente)</li> <li>Novolin L (lente)</li> </ul>	Long-acting insulins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin U (ultralente)</li> <li>Lantus (insulin glargine)</li> </ul>	Mixtures (2 insulins are pre-mixed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humulin 50/50</li> <li>Humulin 70/30</li> <li>Humalog Mix 75/25</li> <li>Novolin 70/30</li> <li>Novolog Mix 70/30</li> </ul>
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<b>Side effects</b>	Low blood glucose, weight gain, allergic reaction (rare)										

SULFONYLUREA															
<b>How it works</b>	These drugs cause the pancreas to make more insulin. (The drugs listed are the more common sulfonylureas prescribed.)														
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<b>Side effects</b>	Low blood glucose, weight gain, rash, nausea														

MEGLITINIDE / D-PHENYLALANINE							
<b>How it works</b>	These drugs cause the pancreas to make more insulin and act more quickly.						
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• nateglinide	• Starlix						
<b>Side effects</b>	Low blood glucose (rare)						

BIGUANIDE							
<b>How it works</b>	These drugs reduce the amount of glucose that is made by the liver and helps the body better use insulin.						
<b>Examples</b>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Generic name</th> <th>Brand name</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>• metformin</td> <td>• Glucophage</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• metformin</td> <td>• Glucophage XR</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Generic name	Brand name	• metformin	• Glucophage	• metformin	• Glucophage XR
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• metformin	• Glucophage						
• metformin	• Glucophage XR						
<b>Side effects</b>	Nausea, diarrhea, gas, loss of appetite						

THIAZOLIDINEDIONE (GLITAZONE OR TZD)							
<b>How it works</b>	These drugs help the body cells better use insulin and reduce the amount of glucose that is made by the liver.						
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• pioglitazone	• Actos						
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<b>Side effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liver damage (nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dark urine, abdominal pain)</li> <li>Fluid retention/or swelling</li> <li>Decrease how well some birth control pills work</li> </ul>						

ALPHA-GLUCOSIDASE INHIBITORS							
<b>How it works</b>	These drugs help keep blood sugar in target range after a meal.						
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• miglitol	• Glyset						
<b>Side effects</b>	Gas, bloating, diarrhea, stomach pain						

COMBINATION DRUGS									
<b>How it works</b>	Sometimes several drugs are combined and sold as one pill. The action is based on the two drugs that have been combined.								
<b>Examples</b>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Generic name</th> <th>Brand name</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>• glyburide &amp; metformin</td> <td>• Glucovance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• glipizide &amp; metformin</td> <td>• Metaglip</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• rosiglitazone &amp; metformin</td> <td>• Avandamet</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Generic name	Brand name	• glyburide & metformin	• Glucovance	• glipizide & metformin	• Metaglip	• rosiglitazone & metformin	• Avandamet
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<b>Side effects</b>	Because you are taking a drug that combines two medications it is possible you will have side effects from both types of drugs. These can include nausea, low blood sugar, weight gain, rash, diarrhea, excess gas, loss of appetite, liver damage, fluid retention/swelling.								

*The purpose of this patient education handout is to further explain or remind you about a medical condition. This handout is a general guide only. If you have specific questions, be sure to discuss them with your health care provider. This handout may be reproduced for distribution to patients.*

