

# How Diabetes Medicines Work

Medicines can play an important role in managing your diabetes.

You and your diabetes care team will decide which medicine is right for you.

Diabetes medicines work with the other parts of your management plan to help you achieve your blood glucose goals.

To understand how your medicines help manage your blood glucose, let's see what happens when you eat.

When you eat, your body breaks down most of the food into glucose, a form of sugar, and releases hormones that travel to your pancreas.

The glucose enters your bloodstream causing your blood glucose level to rise.

In response to this rise in glucose and release of hormones, the pancreas releases insulin. Insulin works like a key to open the cells and let glucose enter.

The glucose is used for energy now or it is stored in the cells for later use.

As insulin works to move the glucose out of your bloodstream and into the cells, your blood glucose level drops.

However, you still need glucose for energy.

To keep your blood glucose level from dropping too low in between meals, your pancreas releases glucagon.

Glucagon triggers the liver to release stored glucose which can be used by the cells for energy.

In people who don't have diabetes, the body maintains a balance of glucose and insulin in the bloodstream, keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range no matter what, or when, you've eaten.

But when you have type 2 diabetes, this process is out of balance and too much glucose builds up in the bloodstream. This is called high blood glucose or hyperglycemia.

The causes of type 2 diabetes vary from person to person.

When you eat, the hormones that are released may not tell your pancreas to release insulin.

Your pancreas may not make or release enough insulin. Your liver may release too much stored glucose into your bloodstream.

Or your cells may have trouble taking in glucose because they can't use insulin. This is called insulin resistance.

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There are several classes of non-insulin medicines used to treat each of these conditions. And more are being developed all the time. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the medicine that works best to manage your blood glucose level.

Although Diabetes is complex, it's manageable when you have the right information and support. Diabetes educators are trained to be your diabetes expert and can help you learn how to successfully thrive with diabetes. You deserve nothing less!

Ask your provider for a referral today! Find one at [www.DiabetesEducator.org/find](http://www.DiabetesEducator.org/find).