

## DIABETES MEDICATIONS: SITAGLIPTIN PHOSPHATE, SAXAGLIPTIN, LINAGLIPTIN

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DPP-4 inhibitors are a class of oral medications you may be prescribed when you have type 2 diabetes. They include sitagliptin phosphate, saxagliptin and linagliptin. Please note that these are the generic names of these medications. You may be more familiar with these brand names [on screen: Januvia, Onglyza, Tradjenta.]

DPP-4 inhibitors affect the hormones released by your body when you eat. To see how these medications help control your blood glucose, let's look at how diabetes affects the way your body uses the food you eat.

When you eat, your body breaks down most of the food into glucose, a form of sugar, and releases incretin 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 the incretin hormones, the pancreas releases insulin. Insulin works like a key to open the cells and let glucose enter. Glucose is used for energy now, or stored in the cells for later use.

To keep your blood glucose level from dropping too low between meals, your pancreas releases glucagon. Glucagon triggers the liver to release stored glucose, which can be used by the cells for energy.

In some people with type 2 diabetes, the incretin hormones are broken down too quickly. When this happens, the pancreas doesn't release enough insulin to remove the glucose from the bloodstream, and the liver releases too much stored glucose causing your blood glucose level to rise even higher.

However, when you take a DPP-4 inhibitor, the incretin hormones do not get broken down as quickly. Your pancreas recognizes you have eaten and can release enough insulin to open the cells and remove the glucose from your bloodstream. And your liver does not release too much stored glucose.

These medications also slow the digestion of nutrients from the foods you eat. This slows down how fast glucose builds up in your bloodstream, giving your pancreas time to release more insulin. This also helps you feel full so you eat less.

Your diabetes care team will tell you the correct dose and time to take your DPP-4 inhibitor, but it is usually taken once a day and can be taken with or without food.

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Because it only works when your blood glucose is high, you do not have an increased risk of hypoglycemia, also called low blood glucose. Some side effects may include upper respiratory infection, stuffy or runny nose and sore throat, headaches, stomach discomfort and diarrhea. If you have any side effects, let your diabetes care team know about them. However, do not stop taking your diabetes medication unless you are told to do so.

Taking your DPP-4 inhibitor as directed can help you gain control of your blood glucose levels and help you avoid the long-term complications of diabetes.