

DIABETES MEDICATIONS: WHAT IS AMYLIN?

TRANSCRIPT

For some people with diabetes, keeping their blood glucose in a healthy range throughout the day can be difficult for insulin to handle alone. Insulin's working partner in the body is a hormone called amylin.

"Eric, what we're going to do today is introduce you to a new medication that we're going to try to improve your glucose control. And that medication is called Symlin."

In people who don't have diabetes, the pancreas releases both insulin and amylin when you eat. Amylin works to slow the movement of food through your stomach. And in turn slows the release of glucose into your bloodstream, helping your body to avoid high blood glucose.

But when you have diabetes, your body either does not produce any amylin, or does not produce enough amylin to slow the food moving through your stomach. This means that after you eat, glucose rushes into the bloodstream. Too much glucose too fast can make it difficult for insulin to do its job of moving glucose into your cells. The glucose builds up in the bloodstream instead.

If you experience high blood glucose after meals and have trouble keeping your blood glucose levels in your target range, your diabetes care team may suggest pramlintide acetate, an injectable form of amylin. You may be more familiar with the brand name, Symlin.

Taken just before mealtime, pramlintide works with insulin to help lower blood glucose three hours after you eat. Pramlintide is not a replacement for your insulin injections. Although they work together, you cannot mix pramlintide and insulin in the same syringe.

Inject pramlintide into your stomach or upper thigh, at least two inches away from your insulin injection site.

When taking pramlintide, your diabetes care team may reduce the amount of insulin you take with each meal to avoid low blood glucose, also called hypoglycemia.

"I used to be consistently high, consistently low, but consistently inconsistent. And now that my control – my glucose – is a little tighter, I'm feeling a little better."

Working together as partners, insulin and amylin may just give you the glucose control you are trying to achieve and help reduce your risk of long-term complications from diabetes.