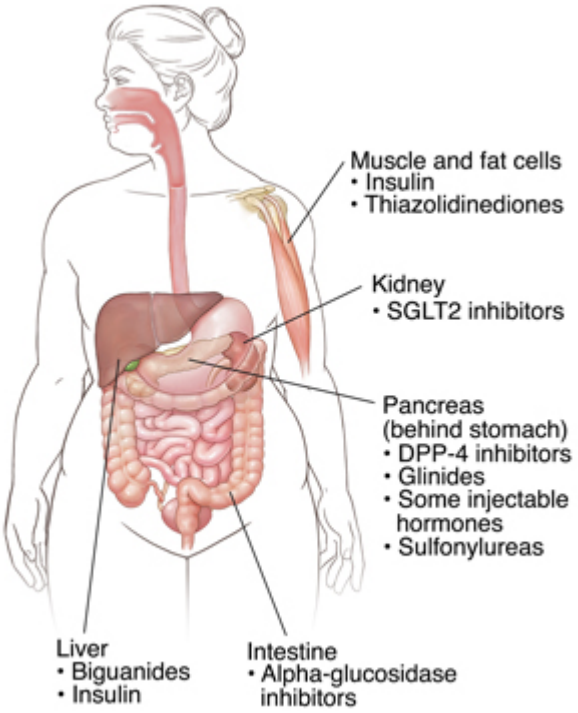
Taking Medicine for Diabetes

Medicines can't cure diabetes. But they can delay or prevent health problems. They do this by helping you manage your blood sugar. Taking medicines every day, especially shots, may seem hard. But they are powerful tools. And they can help you stay in control of your health.

Where the medicines work

Diabetes medicines act on different parts of the body. Many of them affect how the pancreas makes insulin. Others increase how sensitive muscle and fat cells are to insulin. Or they keep the liver from releasing too much glucose. And some cause carbohydrates to break down more slowly. Or to be released more slowly from the stomach. Another type of medicine stops the kidneys from reabsorbing glucose from the urine. The diagram on this sheet shows where each class of medicine works in the body.



Getting familiar with shots

Insulin can't be taken as a pill. It is often injected through the skin to reach the blood. It's not hard to give yourself shots. You may find that they aren't as bad as you fear. And there are new devices for injecting or breathing in insulin. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

Sticking to your medicine routine

It's important to take your medicines at the right times. This will give you the best control over your blood sugar. Having a medicine and diet routine can help keep your blood sugar steady. Keep track of medicines with a pill organizer. And make a daily schedule. Ask your family to help you stick to a medicine and diet routine. Make it a priority.

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If you take other medicines

Medicines of all types can affect blood sugar. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you take. This includes prescription, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbs, and supplements. And always tell the pharmacist that you have diabetes when buying other medicines. Try to get all your medicines from the same pharmacy or pharmacy chain. This way the pharmacists who are helping you are more likely to have your complete list of medicines.

Wear a medical ID alert bracelet or necklace. And carry a list of your medicines with you. This is helpful in case of an emergency. When you see your provider, bring your medicine list. Check that your health records are up to date. They should have your current medicines and dosages. You may be able to download your records. If so, carry them to appointments with your different healthcare providers.

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