

# Metformin

You may be prescribed Metformin when you have type 2 diabetes.

To see how this medication works, 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.

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

In response to this rise in glucose, 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 your body for later use.

As insulin works to move the glucose out of your bloodstream and into your body, 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 your body for energy.

In many people with type 2 diabetes, the liver releases too much stored glucose, causing your blood glucose level to stay high.

But when you take metformin, you stop the liver from releasing too much stored glucose into the bloodstream. It also helps your insulin work better.

This lowers your blood glucose level between meals, and even while you sleep at night.

Your diabetes care team will tell you the correct dose and time to take metformin, but it is usually taken with meals.

Side effects may include diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, bloating, gas and indigestion. Taking metformin with meals can help reduce these side effects.

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.

The health of your liver and kidneys should be checked before starting this medication, and your doctor may want to check it from time to time as you continue to take it.

Metformin can increase your risk of a serious condition called lactic acidosis. You are more likely to develop lactic acidosis if you have certain health conditions or drink large amounts of alcohol.

To make sure metformin is safe for you, let your doctor know if you drink alcohol, or if you have liver or kidney disease.

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You may need to temporarily stop taking metformin before having medical procedures using contrast dyes.

Taking your metformin as directed can help you to manage your glucose and avoid long-term complications of diabetes.