

Metformin

When you have diabetes you may be prescribed a medicine called Metformin.

To see how this medicine 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, and releases hormones that travel to your pancreas.

The glucose enters your bloodstream causing your blood glucose (or sugar) 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 your body, your blood sugar level drops.

However, you still need glucose for energy.

To keep your blood sugar 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 sugar 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 sugar 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.

Some side effects of Metformin may include diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, bloating, gas and indigestion.

Taking Metformin with meals can help reduce these side effects.

Discuss the complete list of side effects with your doctor before taking Metformin.

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

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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.

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

Store Metformin at room temperature, away from moisture and direct sunlight.

Keep it out of sight and out of reach of any children.

Take Metformin exactly as prescribed.

If you have any questions about Metformin, ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.