

# Diabetes Medications: Acarbose, Miglitol

When you have Type 2 Diabetes, you may be prescribed acarbose or miglitol.

You may be more familiar with these brand names.

These medications help keep your blood glucose in control by slowing the digestion of carbohydrates from the foods you eat.

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 stored for later use.

In many people with Type 2 Diabetes, the pancreas does not release enough insulin to open the cells and remove glucose from your bloodstream. So, your blood glucose level stays high.

Acarbose or miglitol slows down the digestion of carbohydrates 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 helps remove glucose from the bloodstream preventing your blood glucose from rising too high after meals.

Because these medications mainly work at slowing digestion, they should be taken with the first bite of your meal.

When you first start taking acarbose or miglitol, you may experience gas, diarrhea, nausea, or abdominal cramps.

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. Side effects for these medications usually disappear after a few weeks.

These medications are one of the many options available to help you manage your diabetes. Take them as directed and you can enjoy greater control of your blood glucose and avoid the long-term complications of diabetes.