

## Survival Skills....Diabetes Pills



With Type 2 Diabetes, your pancreas either makes too little insulin, or you cannot use the insulin you make. At first, a meal plan and exercise may help lower your blood sugar. **If a meal plan and exercise do not work, your doctor may add one or more type of diabetes pills to lower your blood sugar.** Each type of pill helps lower blood sugar in a different way. If your blood sugars are still too high, you may need to also take insulin shots with your diabetes pills.

| Brand Name  | Generic Name                          | How it Works   | When to Take Pill  | Side Effects  | Special Tips   |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Amaryl<br>Glucotrol (XL)<br>DiaBeta,<br>Glynase,<br>Micronase | Glimepiride<br>Glipizide<br>Glyburide | Charges up the pancreas to make more insulin.                            | If you take one pill a day, take it before breakfast.<br>If you take two pills a day, take one before breakfast and one before supper. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Low blood sugar</li> <li>•Weight gain</li> <li>•Skin rash or itching</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Take pills at the same time each day.</li> <li>•Ask your pharmacist or doctor when you should take your pill.</li> </ul>   |
| Prandin<br>Starlix  | Repaglinide<br>Nateglinide            |  | Take from one to 30 minutes before eating a meal.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Low blood sugar</li> <li>•Weight gain</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lowers blood sugar about one hour after you take it and is out of your body in about 3-4 hours.</li> <li>•If you skip a meal, do not take your Prandin/Starlix.</li> </ul>   |
| Precose<br>Glyset   | Acarbose<br>Miglitol                  | Slows down carbohydrates going into the intestines after a meal.         | Three times a day - at each meal.<br>Take with the first bite of the meal.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas, bloating, diarrhea that usually goes away in a few weeks.</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you skip a meal or are sick and not eating, do not take your pill.</li> <li>•You need to <b>treat low blood sugar with glucose tablets or gel.</b></li> </ul>   |
| Glucophage (XR)   | Metformin                             | Fixes the “leaky” liver and reduces the amount of sugar the liver makes. | Take 2 to 3 times a day with meals.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea.</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Your doctor will check regularly to see that your kidneys work while you take Metformin.</li> <li>•If you are having surgery or a test with dye, tell your doctor.</li> <li>•Rarely, can cause flu like symptoms and trouble breathing.</li> </ul> |

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| Actos<br>Avandia   | Pioglitazone<br>Rosiglitazone | “Unlocks” the cells of the body and makes them more sensitive to insulin. | Take without regard to meals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight gain</li> <li>• Edema</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You should have liver tests when you start taking these pills, every two months of the first year and regularly thereafter.</li> <li>• Talk with your doctor as these medications may be contraindicated in congestive heart failure.</li> </ul> |
| Januvia<br>Onglyza | Sitagliptin<br>Saxagliptin    | Enhances insulin production & reduces leaky liver.                        | Take once daily               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuffy, runny nose, headache, sore throat or upper respiratory infection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In reduced kidney function dose will be reduced.</li> <li>• Talk with your doctor if you have had or develop pancreatitis.</li> </ul>  |
| Combination pills  |                               |   |                               |  | Numerous combinations are available.  |

### **Tips for Taking Your Pills:**

- **If you forget to take a pill:**
  - If you take only a morning pill, take the pill later in the day as soon as you remember.
  - If you forget until the next day, do not double up pills - it may cause a low blood sugar reaction.
  - If you take a morning and evening pill and forget the morning dose, do not double up pills - it may cause a low blood sugar reaction.
- Take your pills as ordered, not just when you think your blood sugar is high.
- Learn the names of your diabetes pills, the dose, and how often to take them.
- Learn the color and shape of your pills - if the color changes, ask the pharmacist why. Throw away discolored pills.
- Do not switch pills with others.
- Take pills even when sick - often an illness will cause blood sugar to increase.
- Call your doctor if you have side effects, but never stop taking your pills.
- Never use pills past the expiration date.

**Please call 1-800-SENTARA (736-8272) to sign up for the  
“Healthy Living with Diabetes” classes.**