

PATIENT EDUCATION

Biguanides (such as metformin)

What is metformin?

Metformin is a medication taken by mouth for diabetes control in people who have type 2 diabetes. It can be used alone or in combination with other medicines for diabetes.

How will taking metformin help my blood sugar control?

Metformin increases your body's sensitivity to insulin, especially the sensitivity of your liver and muscle to insulin. The liver stores sugar and slowly releases it, with diabetes the liver puts too much sugar in the blood especially at night while your sleeping.

What are the common side effects of metformin?

The most common side effects with taking metformin are upset stomach, gas, or diarrhea. These effects generally go away as your body adjusts to the medicine.

How do most people take this medication?

Most people start this medication at a very low dose to help avoid upset stomach. You may be told to take 1 tablet after dinner for a week, then increase to take 1 tablet after breakfast and after dinner for a week. Most people will end up taking 1000mg of metformin twice a day.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Take a missed dose as soon as you remember it. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular schedule.

Does metformin require any special laboratory tests or monitoring?

Metformin requires special laboratory tests be done before you start the medicine and every 6 months while you are taking the medicine-these lab tests check your kidneys and liver. Certain people should not use metformin. If you have an acidic blood condition, are dehydrated, drink alcohol to excess, have bad kidney or liver disease, or have a severely weakened heart, you should not take this medicine.

How will I know if the medication is working?

If you are checking your blood sugar, you will notice a decrease in your blood glucose results within 2 to 4 weeks of starting metformin. When your doctor checks your A1C, if the medicine is working the A1C will improve.



For more information contact:	
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http://www.anmc.org/services/diabetes/	Diabetes Pharmacist (907) 729-2164

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation jointly own and manage the Alaska Native Medical Center under the terms of Public Law 105-83. These parent organizations have established a Joint Operating Board to ensure unified operation of health services provided by the Medical Center.