

# Oral Hypoglycemic Agents

<b>GENERIC</b>	<b>BRAND</b>
Glimepiride	Amaryl
Glyburide	DiaBeta, Micronase, Glynase
Glipizide	Glucotrol, GlucotrolXL
Repaglinide	Prandin
Acetohexamide	Dymelor
Chlorpropamide	Diabinese
Tolazamide	Tolinase
Tolbutamide	Orinase

## Description

Oral hypoglycemic agents (OHAs) are a group of drugs used to help reduce the amount of sugar present in the blood. They are not insulin, but they stimulate the pancreas to produce insulin. OHAs are usually used in the treatment of adult onset diabetes (also known as Type 2 or non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus).

**REMEMBER THIS MEDICINE WILL NOT CURE YOUR DIABETES, BUT DOES HELP TO CONTROL IT.**

The OHA, along with your meal and exercise plans should help you reach your target blood sugar. A stable blood glucose level helps to reduce the risk of heart, kidney, eye and blood vessel diseases. Check with your doctor to find out your target blood sugar range.

## Dosage and Administration

Take this medicine 30 minutes before a meal and at about the same time every day. If it causes stomach upset, then take it with the meal. Try not to skip meals when taking these medicines. Your doctor will decide on the amount of medicine you will need and how often you should take it. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Do not double the next dose. Instead, go back to your regular dosing schedule.

## Side Effects

The most common side effect of OHAs is low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Each person's reaction to low blood sugar varies. The following are signs of low blood sugar:

- shakiness
- fast heartbeat
- hunger
- irritability
- cold sweat
- dizziness
- headache
- pale or moist skin
- personality change

If you note any of these signs, you should:

- check your blood sugar if you are monitoring it at home
- eat or drink any of the following that contain sugar: 4 oz of orange juice or regular soda; 6-7 Lifesavers®.

Some causes of low blood sugar include:

- a delayed or missed meal or snack
- too little food at the meal
- a higher dose of OHA than needed
- unusual amount of exercise.

If hypoglycemia occurs often, please contact your doctor.

Side effects may rarely occur which usually do not require medical attention.

These side effects may go away during treatment as your body adjusts to the medicine. **Check with your doctor if the following are severe or if they persist:**

- diarrhea
- heartburn
- nausea.
- vomiting
- stomach pain
- skin rash or hives

## Special Instructions

It is important to follow your outlined meal plan.

Tell your family/significant other about how you react to low blood sugar. They must be alert to these signs.

Do not take other medicines unless approved by your doctor. This includes over-the-counter medicines. Tell any doctor that prescribes medication that you are taking an OHA.

Alcohol may cause low blood sugar. Avoid alcohol until you talk to your doctor about its use.

If you are on an OHA and are considering pregnancy, please discuss diabetes care with your doctor.

Do not take OHA if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

For more information on diabetes, ask your doctor or contact the Outpatient Diabetes Nurse Educator at: 312/926-4980 or 926-2213.

My dose is: \_\_\_\_\_

I am to take 30 minutes before (circle one)

Breakfast      Lunch      Dinner

*Developed by:  
Department of Pharmacy  
and the Diabetes Nurse  
Clinicians*