

METFORMIN

Other names: Apo-Metformin[®], Arrow-Metformin[®]



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medicine

Metformin is used to control blood sugars in people with diabetes (a higher than normal amount of sugar in the blood). Insulin is the body's natural hormone that regulates blood sugar levels in the body. In patients with diabetes, there is insufficient insulin in the body to control blood sugar levels, and consequently these patients have high blood sugar levels. Metformin helps to lower blood sugar levels by reducing the absorption of sugar from the gut, and helping insulin to work better.

Diet and exercise are also important in patients with diabetes, along with taking your medication regularly.

When to take this medicine

Take your metformin regularly at the same time(s) each day. It is important to take metformin with meals as it can cause stomach upset. When you first start taking metformin, it is best to start with a low dose, and then slowly increase the dose over a period of 3-4 weeks or as directed by your doctor.

If you miss a dose

Take as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- severe nausea or vomiting
- trouble breathing
- slow heartbeat
- severe stomach pain
- tiredness, weakness, dizziness
- unusual muscle pain
- not eating or unexplained weight loss

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- nausea, upset stomach or mild diarrhoea (these are common with metformin and should pass)
- flatulence (wind)
- headache
- metallic taste in mouth

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice any other side effect(s) from your medicine that are not mentioned here.

Caution

- Make sure your doctor knows if you are pregnant, are planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- If you are taking metformin with other medication for diabetes you may develop a low blood sugar level. Symptoms of a low blood sugar level include:
 - sweating
 - shaking
 - weakness
 - confusion
 - hunger
 - or blurred vision
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you develop a low blood sugar level, you may need to eat or drink something with sugar in it straight away (e.g. glucose tablets, fruit juice or jelly beans).
- Tell your doctor or dentist you are taking metformin before you have any kind of surgery.
- If you become sick with a cold, fever or flu, it is very important to continue eating your normal meals and taking your metformin.

Other medications

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medication including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Metformin may interact with the following medication:

- alcohol (avoid excessive intake)
- warfarin (an anticoagulant)
- some contrast dyes used for X-ray procedures (iodinised contrast dye). Metformin may be stopped for a few days if you have a X-ray procedure

Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.