

Medication Information

Pioglitazone

(Pie – o – glit – ah - zone)

Other names for this medication

Actos®

How this medication is used

This medication is used to treat diabetes. It lowers the amount of sugar in the blood by helping your body use your own insulin better.

This medication is not insulin.

It takes 3 to 12 weeks for this medication to start to work.

If you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, talk to your doctor or health care provider about the risks and benefits before taking this medication.

To avoid unwanted pregnancy, talk to your doctor or health care provider about using other forms of birth control.

How to take this medication

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor or diabetes care provider. This medication may be taken with or without food.

If you miss a dose of this medication, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.

You need to have blood tests to check your liver while taking this medication.

This medication works better when you follow a diet and exercise program. You will need to test your blood sugar while you are taking this medication.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take over-the-counter medications.

While you are taking this medication you may notice:

- muscle aches
 - diarrhea
 - headache
 - low blood sugar
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Some signs of low blood sugar are:

- dizziness
- clammy skin
- cold sweat
- tiredness
- slurred speech
- shakiness
- headache
- mood change

Check your blood sugar if you feel any of these symptoms.

When your blood sugar is below 4 mmol/L:

1. Take 15 grams of a fast acting carbohydrate right away.
Taking 15 grams of a fast acting carbohydrate will raise your blood sugar quickly. Examples of 15 grams of fast acting carbohydrates are:
 - Chew glucose or dextrose tablets – read the package to know how many total 15 grams **or**
 - Drink 175 ml or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice **or**
 - Drink 175 ml or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup regular pop
2. Wait 15 minutes and check your blood sugar again.
3. If your blood sugar is still below 4 mmol/L, treat again with 15 grams of a fast acting carbohydrate listed above.
4. Repeat these steps until your blood sugar is in your target level.
5. If your next meal or snack is more than 1 hour away, you need to eat $\frac{1}{2}$ sandwich or 6 crackers with cheese to keep your blood sugar greater than 4 mmol/L.

You can talk to your diabetes care provider or pharmacist about other fast acting carbohydrates to carry with you to prevent or treat low blood sugar.

When you are sick:

During a visit with your diabetes care provider it is important to learn how to look after yourself when you are sick. When you are sick, your blood sugar can change a lot and quickly. Follow the sick day plan you get from your diabetes care provider. Here are some general guidelines.

Blood sugars tend to go up on sick days. You need to keep taking Pioglitazone. Test your blood sugar every 4 hours while you are feeling sick.

When your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L you need to have sugary fluids to maintain your blood sugar in your normal range. Examples of sugary fluids are:

- 80 ml or 1/3 cup gingerale, apple juice or Kool-Aid®
- 1/2 popsicle
- 60 ml or 1/4 cup Jello®

You should have sugary fluid every hour that you are awake.

Contact your doctor or diabetes care provider right away if you notice:

- changes in vision
- shortness of breath
- dark urine
- slow heartbeat
- yellow eyes or skin
- swelling of the hands, legs or feet
- rapid weight gain that you cannot explain

Medical alert information

When you have diabetes, you should wear or carry Medic Alert® identification.