

# Acarbose (Precose®)

## Patient Information Sheet

### Basic Information About Acarbose

- Acarbose is a medication used to treat diabetes. Acarbose may be used by itself, or it may be combined with other diabetes pills or with insulin. Acarbose should not be combined with a similar medicine called miglitol (Glyset®).
- Acarbose (Precose®) tablets come in 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg sizes. **Your dose is listed on the other side of this form.**
- Acarbose is taken three times daily with meals. The tablet should be taken with the first bite of the meal.

### What Side Effects Can Acarbose Cause?

- The most common side effects caused by acarbose are abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, and flatulence (excessive gas). These side effects can be limited by starting at a low dose, and then gradually increasing the dose over time. Even in people who continue to take acarbose, these side effects go away in many people after one or two weeks. If you have severe side effects, or side effects do not resolve after a few weeks, you should report these to your doctor.
- Rarely, acarbose can cause a rash. If this happens, or if you have other unexplained symptoms when starting acarbose, please report these to your doctor.
- Acarbose by itself almost never causes low blood sugar. However, if acarbose is added to other diabetes medications it may increase the risk of having a low blood sugar. You may need to monitor your blood sugar more carefully while starting acarbose. You should tell your doctor if you are having problems with low blood sugars.
- **If you do have a low blood sugar while you are taking acarbose, you will need to treat the low blood sugar with glucose** (glucose tablets are available in most pharmacies and grocery stores and do not require a prescription). Other types of sugar will not be absorbed normally while you are taking acarbose and therefore will not treat a low blood sugar.

### Are There Special Precautions for People Who Take Acarbose?

- If you have inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease) or a blockage in your intestine, you should not take acarbose.
- Acarbose should not be taken by people with certain types of kidney disease.
- If you weigh less than 130 pounds (60 kg), the maximum dose of acarbose you should take is 50 mg three times per day with meals.
- You should have blood tests to check your liver function before starting acarbose, every three months during the first year of acarbose therapy, and periodically after the first year of acarbose therapy. Please notify your doctor if you think this blood testing is overdue.
- If you become pregnant, you should stop acarbose and notify your doctor.

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### What is My Dose of Acarbose?

- To minimize side effects, acarbose is generally started at a low dose and gradually increased to the target dose.
- Acarbose should be taken with the first bite of each meal.

YOU SHOULD TAKE ACARBOSE AS MARKED BELOW:

STARTING DOSE: ACARBOSE (PRECOSE®) 25 MG WITH EACH MEAL

	WITH MORNING MEAL	WITH MID-DAY MEAL	WITH EVENING MEAL
WEEK #1	25 mg	none	none
WEEK #2	25 mg	none	25 mg
WEEK #3 AND BEYOND	25 mg	25 mg	25 mg

DOSE INCREASE: ACARBOSE (PRECOSE®) 50 MG WITH EACH MEAL

	WITH MORNING MEAL	WITH MID-DAY MEAL	WITH EVENING MEAL
WEEK #1	50 mg ♦	25 mg *	25 mg *
WEEK #2	50 mg ♦	25 mg *	50 mg ♦
WEEK #3 AND BEYOND	50 mg ♦	50 mg ♦	50 mg ♦

\*25 mg = one 25 mg tablet  
♦50 mg = one 50 mg tablet or two 25 mg tablets

DOSE INCREASE: ACARBOSE (PRECOSE®) 100 MG WITH EACH MEAL

	WITH MORNING MEAL	WITH MID-DAY MEAL	WITH EVENING MEAL
WEEK #1	100 mg #	50 mg ♦	50 mg ♦
WEEK #2	100 mg #	50 mg ♦	100 mg #
WEEK #3 AND BEYOND	100 mg #	100 mg #	100 mg #

**100 mg dose not for patients under 60 kg (130 pounds)**

♦50 mg = one 50 mg tablet or two 25 mg tablets  
# 100 mg = one 100 mg tablet or two 50 mg tablets

Physician Notes:

Dose increases may be made after 4-8 weeks on given dose, e.g. increase to 50 mg TID after 4-8 weeks on 25 mg TID. Dose increases should be made according to measurements of the 1 hour postprandial glucose and the hemoglobin A1c. The goal for 1 hour postprandial glucose is < 180 mg/dl.

### Will My Dose Change? How Should I Monitor My Blood Sugar?

- Acarbose has its greatest effect on lowering the blood sugar after meals. You may be asked to check your blood sugar one hour after meals to check how well acarbose is working.
- If your blood sugar is still high 4 to 8 weeks after you reach your target dose, you may need to have your dose increased or may need to start additional diabetes medications. Your doctor will discuss any changes with you. **You should not change the dose without talking with your doctor first.**
- **If you are having problems with low blood sugar, please call your doctor.**