

Metformin

(Glucophage[®], Glucophage XR[®], Fortamet[®], Glumetza[®])

Information for Patients

Basic Information About Metformin

- Metformin is a medication used to treat diabetes. Metformin may be used by itself, or it may be combined with other diabetes pills or with insulin.
- Metformin tablets come in 500 mg, 850 mg, and 1000 mg sizes. Metformin extended release tablets come in 500 mg, 750 mg, and 1000 mg sizes. **Your dose is listed on the other side of this form.**
- Metformin should generally be taken with food to minimize side effects, although it can be taken without food.

What Side Effects Can Metformin Cause?

- The most common side effects of metformin are diarrhea, nausea, abdominal bloating, flatulence (excessive gas), and suppressed appetite. Occasionally metformin can cause a metallic taste. 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 metformin, these side effects go away after one or two weeks in most people. If you have severe side effects, or side effects do not resolve after a few weeks, you should report these to your doctor.
- Metformin by itself almost never causes low blood sugar. However, if metformin 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 metformin. You should tell your doctor if you are having problems with low blood sugars.
- The most serious side effect of metformin is lactic acidosis. This is very, very rare. However, because it is a serious side effect, if you have any unusual muscle aches, difficulty breathing, feelings of extreme weakness or tiredness, confusion, or unusual stomach discomfort, please report these to your doctor.

Are There Special Precautions for People Who Take Metformin?

- Metformin should not be taken by people with certain types of kidney disease or liver disease, or people who take medications to treat congestive heart failure. People who require oxygen therapy should not take metformin unless specifically directed to do so by their doctor.
- Alcohol in excess may increase the likelihood that metformin causes serious side effects. People taking metformin should not drink to excess.
- Metformin should be stopped temporarily if you are hospitalized or have surgery, if you are unable to drink liquids, or if you have severe vomiting or diarrhea. You should discuss with your doctor when to restart metformin. *It may be necessary for your doctor to perform a blood test to ensure your kidney function is normal.*
- Metformin should be stopped if you have an x-ray test that involves having dye injected into your veins. The last metformin tablet may be taken the day prior to the test or the day of the test. Metformin can be restarted 48 hours after the test, *after your doctor has performed a blood test to ensure your kidney function is normal.*
- If you become pregnant, you should notify your doctor. In some instances (such as polycystic ovary syndrome), there may be benefit continuing metformin through the 1st trimester.

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What Is My Dose of Metformin?

- To minimize side effects, metformin is generally started at a low dose and gradually increased to the target dose. When starting metformin, you should take it with food.
- *Please note your pill size.* This is important for determining how many pills you take at a given time. There may be more than one combination of pills that make a certain dose. For example, a 500 mg dose can be taken as one 500 mg tablet or one-half of a 1000 mg tablet; a 1000 mg dose may be taken as two 500 mg tablets or one 1000 mg tablet.
- If you are having trouble with gastrointestinal side effects, you can delay making a dose for an additional 1-2 weeks. If symptoms are not improving, please discuss with your doctor whether you should stay on metformin.

YOU SHOULD BEGIN METFORMIN AS MARKED BELOW:

TARGET DOSE: METFORMIN 1000 MG IN THE MORNING AND 1000 MG IN THE EVENING

	WITH MORNING MEAL	WITH EVENING MEAL
WEEK #1	none	500 mg *
WEEK #2	500 mg *	500 mg *
WEEK #3	500 mg *	1000 mg ♦
WEEK #4 AND BEYOND	1000 mg ♦	1000 mg ♦

* 500 mg = one 500 mg tablet or ½ of 1000 mg tablet
 ♦ 1000 mg = two 500 mg tablets or one 1000 mg tablet

TARGET DOSE: METFORMIN _____ MG IN THE MORNING AND _____ MG IN THE EVENING

	WITH MORNING MEAL	WITH EVENING MEAL
WEEK #1		
WEEK #2		
WEEK #3		
WEEK #4 AND BEYOND		

500 mg = one 500 mg tablet or ½ of 1000 mg tablet
 750 mg = one 750 mg tablet
 850 mg = one 850 mg tablet
 1000 mg = two 500 mg tablets or one 1000 mg tablet

Will My Dose Change?

- Metformin takes several weeks, once you have reached your target dose, to have the greatest effect on your blood sugar.
- If your blood sugar is still high 2 or 3 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.**