

Pioglitazone (Actos®)

Patient Information Sheet

Basic Information About Pioglitazone

- Pioglitazone is a medication used to treat diabetes. Pioglitazone may be used by itself, or it may be combined with other diabetes pills or with insulin.
- Pioglitazone (Actos®) tablets come in 15 mg, 30 mg, and 45 mg sizes. The pills say “ACTOS” on one side say the dose (“15”, “30”, or “45”) on the other side. **Your starting dose is listed on the other side of this form.**
- Pioglitazone is taken once daily, and may be taken with food or without food. Pioglitazone should be taken at approximately the same time each day. If a dose is missed on one day, the dose *should not* be doubled the next day.

What Side Effects Can Pioglitazone Cause?

- Pioglitazone causes no side effects in most of the people who take it. Pioglitazone can cause weight gain in some people, and can cause fluid retention leading to leg swelling. In people with heart failure or predisposed to heart failure (“CHF”), this fluid retention can cause new or worsening heart failure. Symptoms can include shortness of breath, difficulty breathing while lying flat, or waking up at night short of breath. If you have unexplained symptoms while taking pioglitazone, please report these to your doctor.
- A medication related to pioglitazone is known to cause severe liver disease in rare instances. *Pioglitazone has not been shown to cause liver disease.* However, because of the potential concern that pioglitazone might cause liver disease, blood testing is performed on a periodic basis. In addition, if you have unexplained nausea or vomiting, extreme tiredness, yellow skin or eyes, loss of appetite, or dark-colored urine (like cola) you should stop pioglitazone and report these symptoms to your doctor immediately
- Pioglitazone by itself almost never causes low blood sugar. However, if pioglitazone 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 pioglitazone. You should tell your doctor if you are having problems with low blood sugars.

Are There Special Precautions for People Who Take Pioglitazone?

- If you have chronic liver disease you should not take pioglitazone. If you have heart failure (“CHF”) you should not take pioglitazone unless specifically instructed to do so by your doctor.
- You should have blood tests to check your liver function before starting pioglitazone and periodically after starting pioglitazone therapy.
- Women who have irregular menstrual cycles may begin to have regular menstrual cycles after starting pioglitazone. If pregnancy is not desired, you should use a contraceptive method to prevent pregnancy, such as abstinence, condoms, or birth control pills. If you become pregnant, you should stop pioglitazone and notify your doctor.

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What is My Dose of Pioglitazone?

- PIOGLITAZONE (ACTOS®) 15 MG TABLET – TAKE ONE TABLET ONCE PER DAY
- PIOGLITAZONE (ACTOS®) 30 MG TABLET – TAKE ONE TABLET ONCE PER DAY
- PIOGLITAZONE (ACTOS®) 45 MG TABLET – TAKE ONE TABLET ONCE PER DAY
- PIOGLITAZONE (ACTOS®) ____ MG TABLET – _____

Usual starting dose is 15 mg or 30 mg once per day Consider starting 45 mg once per day in patients with fasting plasma glucose > 200 or A1c > 9%

Will My Dose Change?

- Pioglitazone takes 4 to 6 weeks to have the greatest effect on your blood sugar.
- The dose of pioglitazone that you begin with might need to be increased if your blood sugar is still high. 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.**