

# Liraglutide

Medication Information Leaflet

## **What is this medication for?**

Liraglutide is used to control diabetes. It works by reducing your food craving and increasing the insulin made by your body in response to the food that you eat. It can also be used to help with weight management in certain individuals.

## **How should I take/use this medication?**

Liraglutide should be injected into the fatty tissue that is between the skin and muscle layer of the skin on your upper arms, thighs or tummy (abdomen). It should not be injected into the veins or into the muscles. Inject the dose told by your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Read the product information leaflet on how to inject this medication.

## **What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?**

If you forget a dose, use the injection as soon as you remember. However, if it is more than 12 hours since you should have injected this medication, skip the missed dose. Then inject the next dose as usual the following day.

Do not inject an extra dose or increase the dose on the following day to make up for the missed dose.

## What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if you:

- Are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- Are pregnant, planning to get pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have heart, kidney or liver problems
- Have stomach or intestinal problems, gastroparesis (a condition in which there is delayed stomach emptying) or inflammatory bowel disease
- Have thyroid cancer

This medication should not be used if you have type 1 diabetes (your body does not produce any insulin) or a condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (increase in ketones in blood or urine). Diabetic ketoacidosis is a complication of diabetes that is caused by an increase in the amount of ketones in your blood or urine, which causes your blood to become more acidic. Symptoms of diabetic ketoacidosis include:

- Increased urination
- Feeling thirsty
- Feeling sick, nauseous or vomiting
- Feeling drowsy or tired
- Having abdominal pain
- Having a flushed face
- Sweet fruity smell in your breath

You should see the doctor immediately if you have the above symptoms.

This medication does not replace insulin.

## What are some common side effects of this medication?

Like all medications, this medication may cause some possible side effects but not everyone experiences them. Consult your healthcare professional if any of the side effects becomes severe and bothersome.

The common side effects of Liraglutide include:

- Nausea, vomiting, stomach discomfort
  - Inject this medication with or after food to reduce nausea and vomiting
  - Avoid food that is too rich, spicy or has strong smells
- Diarrhea/constipation
- Decrease in appetite
- Bruising, pain, irritation, itch and rash at injection site
- Low blood sugar if Liraglutide is used together with other diabetes medications like sulfonylureas (eg. Glipizide, Gliclazide) and insulin

This medication may cause low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Symptoms of low blood sugar include:

- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Hunger
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Blurred vision
- Walking unsteadily
- Fast heartbeat

If you experience any of these low blood sugar symptoms, do the following immediately:

Step 1: Check your blood sugar level with a home blood sugar meter (glucometer) if available. If your blood sugar level is less than 4 mmol/L, take 15 grams of fast-acting sugar. Examples of 15 grams of fast-acting sugar include:

- 3 glucose tablets or
- Half a glass of fruit juice (200ml) or
- Half a can of soft drink or sweetened drink (175ml) or
- 1 can of less sugar soft drink (330ml) or
- 3 teaspoons of sugar, honey or syrup

Step 2: Monitor yourself for 15 minutes. If you have a glucometer (home blood sugar meter), check your blood sugar level again after 15 minutes.

Step 3: If your blood sugar level is still less than 4 mmol/L or you still have symptoms of low blood sugar, you should take another 15 grams of fast-acting sugar as per Step 1.

If your symptoms do not go away, see a doctor or go to the hospital immediately.

Step 4: Take your meal or snack if your blood sugar level is 4 mmol/L and above after consuming the fast-acting sugar earlier on.

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

If the following serious side effects happen, you should consult your healthcare professional immediately:

- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) is a rare but serious side effect of this medication. Symptoms of pancreatitis include:
  - Severe pain in the stomach, abdomen or back area
  - Nausea or vomiting that does not go away
  - Fever

**What are some rare but serious side effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?**

**What food or medication should I avoid when I take/use this medication?**

Avoid taking alcohol with this medication as this may increase your risk of having low blood sugar.

## How should I store this medication?

Keep all new, unopened injections in a refrigerator between 2 to 8 degrees Celsius. **Do not freeze.**

Once you have started using the injection, you can choose to continue storing them in the fridge, or at room temperature (below 30 degrees Celsius). Keep the cap on the injection to protect the medication from light. Keep this medication out of reach of children. Discard the injection 4 weeks after opening.

## How do I handle this medication safely?

Make sure that your liraglutide injection appears clear and colourless/almost colourless before use.

Do not use it if it has been frozen accidentally. Ensure the needles are suitable for use with the injection.

## How should I throw away this medication safely?

You may throw this injection away along with the used needles, into a metal tin or thick plastic container (eg. detergent bottles). You can also buy a container specially designed to throw sharp items, known as a sharps box, to prevent any injuries due to the needles.

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### Disclaimers

Please take note that the above is not a complete list of all possible side effects. If you have any concerns about your medication or if you have other side effects that you think are caused by this medication, please consult your doctor or pharmacist.

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.*

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