

# Sulphonylurea

Gliclazide, glimepiride, glipizide and tolbutamide belong to a group of medicine which are used to treat diabetes known as sulphonylurea.



## What are these medicines used for?

Gliclazide, glimepiride, glipizide and tolbutamide are used to control your diabetes by helping your pancreas release more insulin to lower your blood sugar level.

## Dosage and How to Take

- Do not stop taking your medicines without checking with your doctors.
- You should follow the dose on the medicine label and take the medicine regularly and exactly as what your doctor or pharmacist tells you.
- Take these medicines just before food.
- If you missed a dose, take your **next dose** immediately before food. Skip the dose you missed. Do not double your dose or use extra medicine to make up for the missed dose.

## Side Effects, Precautions, Contraindication

### What are the possible side effects of the medicines?

#### Low Blood Sugar

The most common side effect with the use of diabetes medicines is low blood sugar. If you take diabetes medicines but do not eat on time, your blood sugar may become too low. Low blood sugar levels might also happen if you do not eat well.

Symptoms of low blood sugar are weakness, dizziness, hunger, sweating, trembling, blurred vision, unsteady walk or fast heartbeat.

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

**Step 1:** Take 15 grams of sugar. The following are examples of 15 grams of sugar.

- 3 glucose tablets or
- Half a glass of fruit juice or
- 2 to 4 teaspoons of sugar, honey or syrup

**Step 2:** You should feel better in about 15 minutes. If you have a home blood sugar meter, you should check your blood sugar level.

**Step 3:** If your blood sugar level is less than 4mmol/L or you still have symptoms of low blood sugar, you should repeat Step 1 from above.

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

### **How do I know if I am allergic to these medicines?**

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

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

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medicine immediately and see your doctor.

### **What precautions should I follow when taking the medicines?**

- Before taking the medicines, inform your doctor if:
  - you are allergic to this medicine or any other medicines
  - you are taking other prescription and non-prescription medicines
  - you have a heart condition, kidney or liver problem
  - you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant
  - you are breastfeeding
- If you drink alcohol without eating, it may cause a very low blood sugar level.
- Your blood sugar levels should be tested with a home blood sugar meter as instructed by your healthcare professional.
- If you visit another doctor, do inform him that you are taking medicines for diabetes.

- If your doctor informed you that you need to do a fasting blood test, do not take your diabetes medicine until after you have had your blood taken and are ready to eat.
- If you are eating less because you are sick, have a surgery or changed diet, please inform your doctor as there may be a need to adjust your medicines.

## Handling and Storage

- Keep your medicines in the original container or packaging, tightly closed or sealed in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight.
- Keep the medicine out of reach of children.
- Throw away all expired medicines.

*This article answers some common questions about these medicines. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.*

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### Read these next:

- Being Hospitalised When You Have Diabetes
- How to Use an Insulin Pen
- Diabetes Treatment: Capsules/Tablets