

SGLT2 inhibitors (“Gliflozins”) in Type 2 Diabetes

The SGLT2 inhibitor you are taking

Medication name: _____ Brand name: _____

SGLT2 inhibitors: How do they work and benefits

SGLT2 inhibitors are a new class of blood sugar lowering medication used in people with type 2 diabetes. This medication works in the kidneys. It helps your body remove excess sugar by passing it into the urine. As a result, your blood sugar levels are lowered.

This medication can also:

Lower blood sugar levels



Lower heart attack risks



Lower stroke risks



Help with weight loss



Slow kidney damage



Common side effects and what to do?

Common side effects	What to watch out for?	What to do if it happens?
Genital and urinary tract infections for example thrush	Genital itch, pain or pain on urination	Contact your doctor or pharmacist
Dehydration	Greater thirst, dry lips	Ensure you drink enough water, up to the amount your doctor has suggested
Constipation	Difficulty passing stools	
Dizziness	Low blood pressure	

Other side effects could include passing more urine or passing urine more frequently, nausea and headache. **Tell your doctor or pharmacist if these side effects occur.**

Some medications, vitamins or herbal supplements can interact with this medication. It may increase your chances of getting unwanted side effects. It may also affect the management of your diabetes.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist all the medications you are taking.

Very rare side effect: Ketoacidosis

Ketoacidosis

Ketoacidosis is a rare but serious side effect. When it occurs, a chemical called ketone starts to build up. High levels of ketone can make the blood more acidic. Your blood sugar levels could either be high or normal. This condition is dangerous if left untreated.

Who is at risk of ketoacidosis?

Ketoacidosis is more likely to occur in situations when you are unwell or under 'stress'. For example, when you are unable to eat or drink, or going to have surgery.

To reduce the risk of ketoacidosis, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about stopping your SGLT2 inhibitor when you are:



Feeling severely ill



Going to have surgery
in the next 7 days



Unable to eat or drink
normally, fasting or
dehydrated



Temporarily stopping
insulin or lowering your
insulin doses

If you stop your SGLT2 inhibitor, remember to ask your doctor when you can start taking it again.

Symptoms of ketoacidosis include:

- Nausea and or vomiting
- Dehydration – greater thirst, dry lips or mouth, dizziness or decreased alertness
- Shortness of breath, difficulties in breathing

If you experience these symptoms, seek medical help immediately or dial 000.

Notify the healthcare professional that you are taking SGLT2 inhibitor and prompt them to test your blood sugar and blood ketone levels.

For more detailed information about SGLT2 inhibitors, ask your doctor or pharmacist for a Consumer Medicines Information on SGLT2 inhibitors.

This fact sheet was created by the Princess Alexandra Hospital Pharmacy Department.

This fact sheet was adapted from Country Health South Australia Diabetes Service 'SGLT2 Inhibitors – medication for type 2 diabetes' factsheet.

