

DIABETES **MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS**

Your Essential Quick Reference Guide for Safe Management.



Understanding your treatment, empowering your health.

How To Use This Guide



Expectations

Know what to expect when starting.



Recognition

Recognize normal vs. concerning symptoms.



Conversation

Have informed talks with your doctor.



Decisions

Make safer food & drug choices.



! Important: Never stop or change your medication without consulting your doctor first. This guide is educational—not a replacement for medical advice.

Legend



Emergency / Immediate Action



Pro Tip / Lifestyle Advice

Spotlight: Metformin

(Glycomet, Glucophage) - Reduces glucose production & improves sensitivity.

Managing Common Issues

- ✓ **Nausea:** Take with food; start with a low dose.
- ✓ **Diarrhea:** Usually improves in 2-4 weeks.
- ✓ **Metallic Taste:** Temporary; use sugar-free mints.
- ✓ **Loss of Appetite:** Often beneficial for weight management.
- ✓ **Stomach Upset:** Extended-release versions may help.

⚠ Lactic Acidosis Warning

Rare but serious. Seek emergency care if multiple symptoms occur:

- Severe weakness/fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Unusual drowsiness
- Cold/blue skin

Key Interactions: Alcohol (Limit usage), IV Contrast Dye (Stop before scans), Kidney Disease (Check dosage).

Spotlight: Sulfonylureas

(Glimepiride, Gliclazide, Glipizide) - Stimulates pancreas to release insulin.

Handling Lows & Highs

- ✓ **Hypoglycemia (Low Sugar):** The #1 risk. Always carry glucose tablets; eat regular meals.
- ✓ **Weight Gain:** Monitor portions and stay active.
- ✓ **Dizziness/Headache:** Check blood sugar immediately; usually temporary.

! Urgent Risks

Severe Hypoglycemia:
Confusion,
unconsciousness.

Other Signs: Jaundice
(yellow skin/eyes), unusual
bleeding/bruising,
persistent sore throat.

Interaction Alert: Skipping Meals (High risk), Alcohol (Masks symptoms), NSAIDs & Beta-blockers (Increase risk).

Spotlight: SGLT2 Inhibitors

(Dapagliflozin, Jardiance, Invokana) - Removes glucose via urine; protects heart & kidneys.

The Water Rule: Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily.



- ✓ **Hygiene:** Prevent UTIs and yeast infections with good genital hygiene.
- ✓ **Urination:** Increased frequency is normal.
- ✓ **Blood Pressure:** May lower BP; rise slowly from sitting.

! Rare but Serious

✱ **Ketoacidosis (DKA):**
Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, confusion.





✱ **Fournier's Gangrene:**
Severe pain/swelling in genital area.

Precautions: Stop 3-4 days before surgery. Pause medication if fasting or doing heavy exercise.


Spotlight: GLP-1 Agonists

(Ozempic, Trulicity, Rybelsus) - Mimics gut hormones to control appetite & sugar.


Mastering the Gut

-  **Nausea/Vomiting:** Eat smaller meals, avoid fatty foods, sip ginger tea.
-  **Eating Habits:** Eat slowly; stop when satisfied. Do not lie down after eating.
-  **Weight:** Decreased appetite is the desired effect.
-  **Injections:** Rotate sites to prevent lumps.

⚠️ Serious Warnings

 **Pancreatitis:** Severe stomach pain that doesn't go away.

 **Thyroid Signs:** Neck lump, trouble swallowing.

 **Kidneys:** Watch for swelling or decreased urination.

Contraindication: Not for those with a history of Pancreatitis or Thyroid Cancer.

Spotlight: Insulin

The Powerhouse: The most powerful sugar-lowering agent.

Type	Onset	Duration
Rapid-acting	15 min	3-5 hrs
Short-acting	30-60 min	5-8 hrs
Intermediate	1-2 hrs	12-18 hrs
Long-acting	1-2 hrs	24+ hrs

Technique & Storage

- **Storage:** Fridge (unopened) vs. Room Temp (opened). Check expiry.
- **Technique:** Rotate sites to prevent lumps.
- **Golden Rule:** Never skip meals if you've taken mealtime insulin.

Risks

- **Hypoglycemia:** The main side effect. Keep fast-acting glucose ready.
- **Interactions:** Steroids raise needs; Exercise lowers needs.

Warning Signals: When to Call



Call During Office Hours

- Persistent minor side effects
- Questions about interactions
- Starting new medications
- Planning travel or fasting



Seek Immediate Emergency Care

- Severe hypoglycemia (confusion)
- Signs of Lactic Acidosis (breathing trouble)
- Signs of DKA (fruity breath, vomiting)
- Chest pain or severe dehydration
- Severe allergic reactions

Drug Interaction Matrix

How other medications affect your blood sugar.




Meds That May RAISE Sugar

- Steroids (Prednisone)
- Diuretics (Thiazides)
- Decongestants (Pseudoephedrine)
- Some antipsychotics



Meds That May LOWER Sugar

- ACE inhibitors (BP meds)
- Aspirin (high dose)
- Some antibiotics
- MAO Inhibitors

 Always disclose all supplements and OTC drugs to your pharmacist.

Safe Medication Practices



The Do's

- Take medications exactly as prescribed.
- Keep a comprehensive list of all your meds.
- Set digital reminders for medication times.
- Inform all healthcare providers (dentists too).

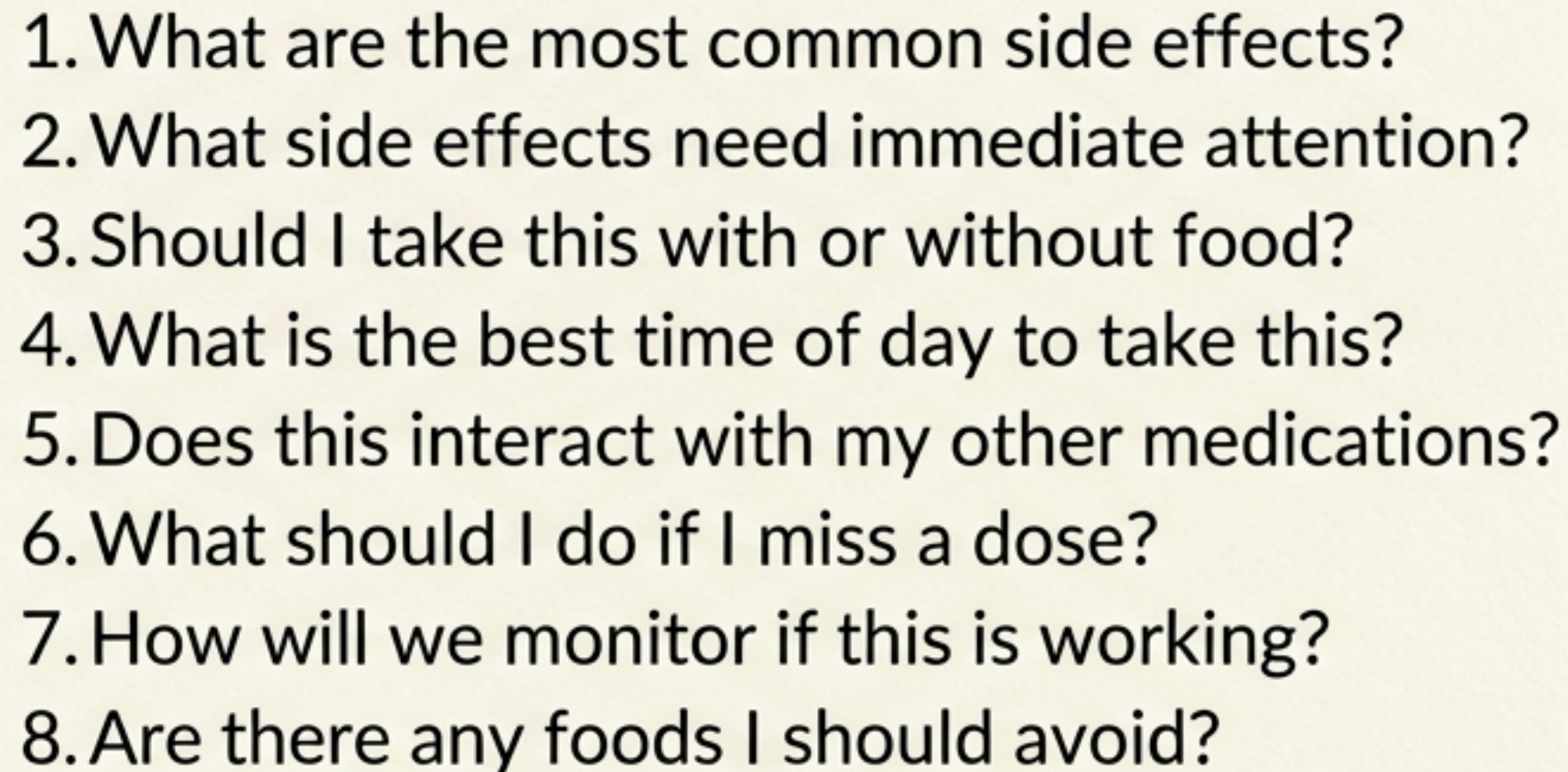


The Don'ts

- Never stop medications without doctor approval.
- Don't double up if you miss a dose (ask first).
- Don't share medications with others.
- Don't take expired medications.

Your Doctor Discussion Guide

8 Questions to ask before starting new meds.

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1. What are the most common side effects?
 2. What side effects need immediate attention?
 3. Should I take this with or without food?
 4. What is the best time of day to take this?
 5. Does this interact with my other medications?
 6. What should I do if I miss a dose?
 7. How will we monitor if this is working?
 8. Are there any foods I should avoid?

Continued Learning & Support



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Disclaimer

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your doctor or pharmacist before starting, stopping, or changing any medication. Individual responses to medications vary. Not all side effects are listed; refer to medication package inserts for complete information.

If you experience any concerning symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

Information current as of 2026. Medication guidelines may change.

Health Gheware

Eat Well, Live Better - The Indian Way.