

Patient Information Leaflet:

Taking Metformin

How does this tablet work?

Metformin helps to manage your diabetes by reducing the amount of glucose your liver makes. This leads to lower blood glucose levels overall and in some patients can help with efforts to lose weight.

Are there any side effects?

Metformin has been in use for Diabetes for decades now and is known to be safe, though side effects are known to occur, such as bloating, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. There is no way to predict who will get these side effects, which are rare and can improve over time if you notice them when you first start taking Metformin (there is a slow acting version of Metformin which some patients find easier to tolerate).

When should Metformin be stopped?

If you become unwell, especially if you are not able to drink enough fluids, or if you have developed diarrhoea and vomiting, then Metformin should be stopped temporarily until you are better.

The reason for this is that Metformin can act in such a way to lead to too much acid in your blood. This is called Lactic Acidosis. While this complication is thankfully very rare, it is still worth being aware of as it can potentially become very serious.

In the presence of certain long-term illnesses which affect the kidneys, liver or heart, then the risk of Lactic Acidosis does increase and your doctor may decide to stop Metformin permanently to prevent this ever happening (you may need an increase in the dose of other anti-diabetic medications or a new medication in the place of Metformin).

What should I do if I become unwell?

- Stop Metformin until you have recovered and are eating and drinking normally.
- Ensure you keep well-hydrated (drink at least 2.5L of water a day).
- Seek medical help if your readings remain higher than usual, you feel very unwell or you are not sure what to do.
- You may need to stop other tablets such as SGLT2 inhibitors, Furosemide, ACE inhibitors or Angiotensin II receptor blockers during this time as well.

NIDC

Newcastle Integrated Diabetes Care

'One team supporting people with type 2 diabetes across the city'