

# Patient Information

## DPP-4 inhibitors: What you need to know



You have been started on a tablet that belongs to a class of medications called DPP-4 inhibitors (Dipeptidyl peptidase 4 inhibitors). These medications are used in Type 2 Diabetes and have been prescribed to help improve your Diabetes control.

### What are they?

The different DPP 4 inhibitors currently in use in the UK are:

- Alogliptin (Vipidia)
- Sitagliptin (Januvia)
- Linagliptin (Tradjenta)
- Saxagliptin (Onglyza)
- Vildagliptin (Galvus)

### How do they work?

DPP-4 inhibitors work by blocking the action of the enzyme DPP-4. This helps lower your blood glucose (blood sugar) in two ways:

- Boosts the production of insulin in your pancreas. More insulin allows glucose to more efficiently move out of the bloodstream and into your body's cells.
- Decreases the amount of glucose released by your liver. Less glucose enters your bloodstream.

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## **DPP-4 Inhibitors: What you need to know**

The DPP-4 enzyme breaks down hormones called incretins. Incretins help stimulate the production of insulin when it is needed (for example, after eating) and reduce the production of glucagon by the liver when it is not needed (e.g. during digestion).

They also slow down digestion and decrease appetite and therefore can help with weight loss. So by protecting incretins from being broken down DPP-4 inhibitors help regulate blood glucose levels.

### **Cautions with DPP-4 Inhibitors**

If you have any of the following conditions DPP-4 Inhibitors may not be suitable and you should discuss with your medical team if you:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Have any significant problems with your liver e.g. active liver cirrhosis.
- Have had pancreatitis in the past.
- Have renal failure your dose may need to be reduced, or if severe the medication stopped.
- Have heart failure.

### **How and when should I take a DPP-4 inhibitor?**

The DPP-4 Inhibitor drugs are taken as a tablet once a day. They do not need to be taken with meals and can be taken any time of the day so long as they are being taken at the same time.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

### **What about Side Effects?**

As with any medication along with useful effects DPP-4 Inhibitors can cause unwanted side effects, however not everyone will experience these. These can include:

- Gastrointestinal problems – including nausea, diarrhoea and stomach pain
- Flu like symptoms – headache, runny nose, sore throat
- Skin reactions – painful skin followed by a red or purple rash
- Joint pains
- Urinary tract infections



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If you have a reaction, which causes difficulty in breathing, or a severe skin reaction, call for medical help.

DPP-4 Inhibitors have been linked to Pancreatitis. If you experience a severe pain in your upper abdomen which may be accompanied with nausea and/or vomiting, call for medical help.

### **Do I need to be monitored?**

Your kidney function will usually be checked before starting this medication.

You will usually be asked to have blood tests repeated in order to see if the medication has had any benefit on your blood sugar levels in 3-4 months' time.

If your sugar levels improve significantly your other diabetes treatments may need to be reviewed or altered.

### **What about driving?**

Taking a DPP-4 should not have any effect on your ability to drive. When used alone or with only Metformin it is not associated with episodes of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugars).

### **Other information**

There is a wealth of information on Diabetes available on the internet. If you would like to find out more about your diabetes, your medication, or local services that could help you improve your diabetes, we recommend: [www.swindondiabetes.co.uk](http://www.swindondiabetes.co.uk)



Have you been on the DESMOND course before? DESMOND stands for 'Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed'.

Desmond is a free course which can help you to:

- Find out more about Type 2 diabetes
- Manage the changes diabetes will bring to your life
- Meet and share experiences with others



## **DPP-4 Inhibitors: What you need to know**

If you have not been before we highly recommend you attend.

### **Contact**

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**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [patient.information@gwh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@gwh.nhs.uk)**

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