

Patient Information

Pioglitazone - What you need to know



You have been started on a tablet called Pioglitazone which belongs to a class of medications called Thiazolidinediones. These medications are used in Type 2 Diabetes and have been prescribed to help improve your Diabetes control.

Pioglitazone is available as 15mg, 30mg and 45mg tablets.

How does pioglitazone work?

Insulin is a naturally occurring hormone in the body which helps to control the levels of sugar in the blood.

People with Type 2 diabetes often develop a resistance to the insulin produced by their body and therefore struggle to control sugar levels.

Pioglitazone works by helping to increase the sensitivity of the cells in your body to your own insulin. This should then cause an improvement in your blood sugar levels.

It usually takes around 2-3 weeks for Pioglitazone to have an effect on your blood sugars and can take up to 2-3 months of use to see the full effect.

As well as improving your sugar levels Pioglitazone can also help to improve levels of 'good' cholesterol (HDL) and decrease levels of 'bad' cholesterol (triglycerides).



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Cautions with Pioglitazone

If you have any of the following conditions Pioglitazone may not be suitable and you should discuss with your medical team:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If you have any significant problems with your liver e.g. active liver cirrhosis
- If you have or have ever had bladder cancer, have a family history of this or have noticed blood in your urine.
- If you have any problems with your heart or have ever been told that you have a condition called heart failure.

How and when should I take Pioglitazone?

Pioglitazone is taken once a day in tablet form and can be taken with or without food.

What about Side Effects?

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

- Weight gain
- Fluid retention
- Blurred vision
- Upper Respiratory infections

Other less common side effects you should be aware of are:

- Bone Fractures: There is a slightly increased risk of bone fractures particularly in women
- Heart Failure: Pioglitazone can cause fluid retention which can worsen or increase the risk of heart failure. This is where the heart fails to pump as effectively as previously, and can lead to fluid build-up and shortness of breath.
- Bladder Cancer: There is a slightly increased risk of bladder cancer if Pioglitazone is taken over a prolonged period. If you notice blood in your urine whilst taking Pioglitazone you should contact a healthcare professional.



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Do I need to be monitored?

After starting Pioglitazone you will usually be asked to have a blood tests repeated in around 3 months in order to see if the medication has had any benefit on your blood sugar levels, and to check for any side effects on your liver.

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

What about driving?

Taking Pioglitazone should not have any effect on your ability to drive. When used alone 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

Desmond

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

If you have not been before we highly recommend you attend. Self-referral by calling: **01793 69 66 22** or GP/practice nurse can refer by completing a referral form.





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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 gwh.pals@nhs.net

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