



## Patient Information

# Sulphonylureas What you need to know

You have been started on a tablet that belongs to a class of medications called Sulphonylureas. These medications are used in type 2 diabetes and have been prescribed to help improve your diabetes control.

### What are they?

There are several types of sulphonylureas currently in use:

- Gliclazide (the most common)
- Glibenclamide
- Glimepiride
- Glipizide

### How do they work?

Sulphonylureas work by increasing the amount of insulin that your pancreas makes. If you have type 2 diabetes your pancreas still produces insulin, however sometimes it does not make enough insulin to keep your blood glucose level normal.

### How else could I benefit from taking this medication?

There is evidence the Sulphonylureas helps to reduce microvascular complications of diabetes such as Retinopathy, Neuropathy and Nephropathy.

### What about Side Effects?

As with any medication they can be associated with side effects. Most commonly these are:

- Hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose)
- Weight gain



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It is recommended that everyone taking Sulphonylureas must check their blood glucose regularly; specifically drivers should check their blood glucose before starting a journey and every 2 hours whilst driving.

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

- Gastrointestinal problems - such as nausea, stomach pain and constipation

### **Caution with Sulphonylureas:**

If you have any of the following conditions Sulphonylureas may not be suitable and you should have a discussion with your medical team if you:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Have a significant problem with your liver.
- Have a significant kidney problem, your dose may be reduced, or if severe the medication should be stopped.

If you have an allergic reaction to Sulphonylureas, seek urgent medical attention. An allergic reaction may include a rash, itching, difficulty in breathing, swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue.

### **How and when I have to take Sulphonylureas?**

They are generally taken once or twice a day, shortly before a meal. They can be taken on their own or prescribed alongside with other diabetes medication such as Metformin.

### **Do I need to be monitored while on Sulphonylureas?**

- Generally your doctor will check your liver and renal function before you start this medication, and then once a year thereafter.
- You will also usually be asked to have a repeat blood test 3-4 months after starting Sulphonylureas. This is in order to see if the medication has had any benefit on your blood glucose levels.

### **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).



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## What you need to know

### 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.

### 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)**

#### Document Control

Division: Swindon Community Health Services  
Department: Diabetes Services  
Approved Date: July 2018  
Next Review Date: July 2020  
Document Number: SCHS-PIL0091