

Palmetto State Pharmaceuticals

Patient Drug Education

METFORMIN HCL 500 MG TABLET

USES:

Metformin is used with a proper diet and exercise program to control high blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes (non-insulin-dependent diabetes). Controlling high blood sugar helps prevent heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, blindness, circulation problems, and decreased sexual ability. Metformin belongs to the class of drugs known as biguanides. It works by helping to restore your body's proper response to the insulin you naturally produce, and by decreasing the amount of sugar that your liver makes and that your stomach/intestines absorb.

HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICATION:

HOW TO USE: Read the Patient Information Leaflet if available from your pharmacist before you start using metformin and each time you get a refill. If you have any questions, consult your doctor or pharmacist. Take this medication by mouth, usually twice a day with meals or as directed by your doctor. Drink plenty of fluids while taking this medication unless otherwise directed by your doctor. The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy. Your doctor may direct you to take a low dose at first, gradually increasing the dose to lower the chance of side effects such as upset stomach. Your doctor will adjust your dose based on your blood sugar levels to find the best dose for you. Follow your doctor's directions carefully. The usual maximum dose for adults is 2550 milligrams each day. If you are already taking another anti-diabetic drug (e.g., chlorpropamide), follow your doctor's directions carefully for stopping/continuing the old drug and starting metformin. Use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. Remember to use it at the same times each day. Inform your doctor if your condition persists or worsens (e.g., blood sugar levels are high). It may take up to 2 weeks before the full benefit of this drug takes effect.

SIDE EFFECTS:

See also Warning section. Nausea, stomach upset, diarrhea, or a metallic taste in the mouth may occur at first as your body adjusts to the medication. If any of these effects persist or worsen, tell your doctor or pharmacist promptly. If stomach symptoms return later (after you are on the same dose for several days or weeks), tell your doctor immediately. Stomach symptoms that occur after the first days of your treatment may be a sign of lactic acidosis. Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because he or she has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects. This medication does not usually cause low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). However, low blood sugar may occur, especially if you take other medications for diabetes, drink large amounts of alcohol, do unusually heavy exercise, or do not consume enough calories from food. Symptoms include cold sweat, blurred vision, dizziness, drowsiness, shaking, fast heartbeat, headache, fainting, tingling of the hands/feet, and hunger. It is a good habit to carry glucose tablets or gel to treat low blood sugar. If you don't have these reliable forms of glucose, rapidly raise your blood sugar by eating a quick source of sugar such as table sugar, honey, or candy, or drink fruit juice or non-diet soda. Tell your doctor about the reaction immediately. To help prevent low blood sugar, eat meals on a regular schedule, and do not skip meals. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out what you should do if you miss a meal. Symptoms of high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) include thirst, increased urination, confusion, drowsiness, flushing, rapid breathing, and fruity breath odor. If these symptoms occur, tell your doctor immediately. Your dosage may need to be increased. A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare. However, seek immediate medical attention if you notice any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, including: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

PRECAUTIONS:

Before taking metformin, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. This medication should not be used if you have certain medical conditions. Before using this medicine, consult your doctor or pharmacist if you have: kidney disease, liver disease, conditions that may cause a low level of oxygen in the blood or poor circulation (e.g., severe congestive heart failure, recent heart attack, recent stroke), metabolic acidosis (e.g., diabetic ketoacidosis), serious infection, severe loss of body fluids (dehydration). Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: adrenal/pituitary gland problems, severe breathing problems (e.g., obstructive lung disease, severe asthma), blood problems (e.g., anemia, vitamin B12 deficiency), fertility problems (e.g., ovulation problems), alcohol use. Before having surgery or any X-ray/scanning procedure using injectable iodinated contrast material, tell your doctor that you are taking this medication. You will need to temporarily stop this medication before the time of your surgery/procedure. Consult your doctor for further instructions. You may experience blurred vision, dizziness, or drowsiness due to extremely low or high blood sugar levels. Use caution while driving, using machinery, or taking part in any other activity that requires clear vision and alertness. Limit alcohol while using this medication to lower your risk of lactic acidosis. It may be harder to control your blood sugar when your body is stressed (e.g., due to fever, infection, injury, or surgery). Consult your doctor because this may require a change in your treatment plan, medications, or blood sugar testing. Kidney function declines as you grow older. This medication is removed by the kidneys. Therefore, elderly people may be a greater risk for side effects such as lactic acidosis or low blood sugar while using this drug. During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. Your doctor may substitute insulin for this drug during your pregnancy. Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. This medication can cause changes in the menstrual cycle (promote ovulation) and increase the risk of becoming pregnant. Consult your doctor or pharmacist about the use of reliable birth control while using this medication. It is not known whether this drug passes into breast milk. This drug could have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Therefore, breast-feeding is not recommended while using this drug. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:

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Your doctor or pharmacist may already be aware of any possible drug interactions and may be monitoring you for them. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicine before checking with them first. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially of: drugs that may affect the kidneys' ability to remove metformin from the body (e.g., cimetidine, cephalexin), "water pills"/diuretics (e.g., furosemide, thiazide diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide). Many drugs can affect your blood sugar levels, making it more difficult to control your blood sugar. Before you start, stop, or change any medication, talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how the medication may affect your blood sugar. Check your blood sugar levels regularly as directed by your doctor. Tell your doctor about the results and of any symptoms of high or low blood sugar. (See also Side Effects section.) Your doctor may need to adjust your anti-diabetic medication, exercise program, or diet. Some medications (e.g., beta blockers such as propranolol) may mask the fast/pounding heartbeat you would usually feel when your blood sugar level falls too low (hypoglycemia). Other symptoms of low blood sugar such as dizziness, hunger, or sweating are unaffected by these drugs. Check the labels on nonprescription/herbal products carefully. Some products may contain sugar/alcohol and may affect blood sugars. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about using these products safely. Cimetidine is a nonprescription drug that is commonly used to treat extra stomach acid. Because it may interact with metformin, ask your pharmacist about other products to treat stomach acid.

NOTES:

Do not share this medication with others. You should attend a diabetes education program to learn more about diabetes and all the important aspects of its treatment, including meals/diet, exercise, personal hygiene, medications, and getting regular eye/foot/medical exams. Keep all medical appointments. Laboratory and/or medical tests (e.g., liver and kidney function tests, fasting blood glucose, hemoglobin A1c, complete blood counts) should be performed periodically to check for side effects and monitor your response to therapy. Check your blood sugar levels regularly as directed.

MISSED DOSE:

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

STORAGE:

Store the US product between 68-77 degrees F (20-25 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Brief storage from 59-86 degrees F (15-30 degrees C) is permitted. Do not store in the bathroom. Store the Canadian product between 59-86 degrees F (15-30 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.