



# Metformin for diabetes

This leaflet is about the use of metformin for diabetes.



This leaflet has been written specifically about the use of this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adult patients. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

If your child starts to breathe very fast and deeply and becomes dizzy, drowsy (sleepy) and confused, stop giving this medicine and take your child to hospital or call an ambulance **straight away**, as they may be suffering from a rare reaction to metformin called lactic acidosis.

## Name of drug

**Metformin hydrochloride**

**Brand names:** Glucophage®, Metsol®

## Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Your child has been prescribed metformin because their diabetes is not fully controlled even when eating a strict diet. Metformin should help to control your child's blood sugar levels, in combination with a controlled diet.

## What is metformin available as?

- **Tablets:** 500 mg, 850 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 500 mg in 5 mL
- **Oral powder:** 500 mg per sachet, 1g per sachet; these contain aspartame

## When should I give metformin?

- Metformin is usually given once each day with or straight after a meal. This is usually in the morning.
- If your child needs a higher dose of metformin, they may need to take it two – three times each day, with or straight after a meal. Ideally these times are six hours apart.

Give the medicine at about the same time each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

## How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of metformin (the dose) that is right for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

Your doctor may suggest that your child has a low dose to start with. They may then increase the dose as your child gets used to the medicine and depending on how your child responds to it.



**It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

## How should I give it?



**Tablets** should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablet.



**Liquid medicine:** Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.

## Oral powder:



- Open the sachet and pour the contents into 150 mL of water in a cup.
- Stir well until all the powder has dissolved and the mixture is clear or slightly hazy.
- You can add fruit squash or juice to the drink if your child does not like the taste. The medicine will still work properly.
- Make sure your child drinks it all. If they cannot drink it all in one go, they can drink it over about 30 minutes. It may help to use a straw.
- If your child does not need to take the full amount in one sachet, put the correct amount into a cup and make sure your child drinks it all. Throw away the liquid that is left over.

## When should the medicine start working?

Metformin should start working straight away, although you may not see any difference in your child.

## What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after drinking the metformin, give them again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after drinking the metformin, you do not need to give them again.

## What if I forget to give it?

**If you usually give it once a day in the morning:** Give the missed dose when you remember during the day, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the next dose is due.

**If you usually give it twice or three times a day:** Give the missed dose as soon as you remember, as long as this is at least 4 hours before the next dose is due. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose, just give the next dose as usual.

Make sure you give the missed dose with or just after food (two biscuits or a slice of toast is enough) or a meal.




**Never give a double dose of metformin.**

## What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give an extra dose of metformin by mistake. It is possible that your child's sugar levels may be lowered. If they are dizzy, jittery or drowsy (sleepy), check their blood sugar level straight away.


If you are concerned that you may have given too much, contact your doctor or local NHS services (111 in parts of England; 0845 4647 in parts of England and Wales; 0845 24 24 24 in Scotland). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

 If your child feels dizzy or light-headed or faints, they may have had too much metformin. Give them a sugary drink and call an ambulance or take them to hospital **straight away** if they do not recover immediately. Take the medicine container or packaging with you, even if it is empty.

### Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

### Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child starts to breathe very fast and deeply and becomes dizzy, drowsy (sleepy) and confused, stop giving this medicine and take your child to hospital or call an ambulance **straight away**, as they may be suffering from a rare reaction to metformin called lactic acidosis.

### Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may get stomach ache, feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit), or get diarrhoea when they first start taking metformin. This should wear off after a few days as your child gets used to the medicine. If it is still a problem after 2 weeks, or you are worried, contact your doctor.
- Your child may feel less hungry and they may say things taste different. This should wear off after a few days.
- Your child may develop itchiness or a rash. Try applying a moisturising cream or anti-itch cream. If this does not help, or your child develops small blisters, contact your doctor, in case your child is allergic to metformin.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor.

You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at <http://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>.

### Can other medicines be given at the same time as metformin?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

### Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

- If your child is very thirsty, needs to pass urine (wee) very frequently or is very tired or weak, contact your doctor as the dose of metformin may need to be changed.

- Your doctor may recommend that you regularly check the level of sugar in your child's blood or urine (wee). Your doctor or nurse will show you how to do this.



Keep all your clinic appointments, as your doctor or nurse needs to check how your child is doing.

- If your child has to have any surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that they are taking metformin.

### General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.



If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact a doctor straight away.

- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

### Where I should keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

### Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about metformin and about other medicines used to treat pain. You can also get useful information from:

**England** - 111 or 0845 4647 - [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**Scotland: NHS 24** - 08454 24 24 24 - [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

**Wales/Galw lechyd Cymru: NHS Direct**  
0845 4647 - [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

**Northern Ireland: NI Direct** - [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

**Diabetes UK** - 0845 120 2960 - [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**  
[www.jdrft1.org.uk](http://www.jdrft1.org.uk)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)