

Acarbose (1 of 1)

What is it?

Acarbose (**Glucobay**) is a drug used to lower the blood sugar level in type 2 diabetes.

How is it Taken?

It can be prescribed on its own or be used in combination with other tablets or with insulin to improve the blood sugar level. It is taken as tablets between one and three times daily and designed to be taken 15 minutes before meals. This is because it works by reducing the amount of sugar absorbed from the small bowel (intestine) during and after a meal. Therefore there is no benefit to taking it at other times.

Side Effects

Side effects with acarbose are very common and relate to its effects on the bowel. Stomach cramps, wind, bloating, belly ache and diarrhoea are often described. The chance of these side effects can be reduced if the drug is started at low dose and increased gradually but the most benefit to the blood sugar level will be seen if the top doses are reached. The frequency of side effects can be quite variable and can reduce with time. They may also respond to a reduction in dose which is the preferred first option to consider rather than abandoning the drug altogether.

Benefits

Compared to the other drugs used to lower the blood sugar level in diabetes, acarbose is one of the weakest but in some overweight persons it may be of some benefit.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the leaflet in the box the drug was dispensed in.

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If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 374 208 email: palservice@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital

We ask for information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

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