

Pioglitazone information sheet

Pioglitazone is a useful, once daily, oral diabetes medication. It helps your own insulin work more effectively, has a favourable effect on your blood lipid level, protects your pancreas and helps reduce Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) which is common in people with type 2 diabetes.

There are three doses: 15mg, 30mg and 45mg. Your initial dose will be 15mg and this will be reviewed after 3-4 months, after checking your diabetes (HbA1c) and liver function blood test results). 30mg is the normal therapeutic dose.

Your Practice Team will ensure Pioglitazone is suitable for you to take. It is not recommended if you have:

- Heart Failure
- Macular Oedema
- an increased risk of fractures
- a history of bladder cancer or blood in your urine.
- problems with your liver, other than NAFLD and Non-Alcoholic Steato Hepatitis (NASH)

Pioglitazone can be taken alongside your current diabetes medication and does not cause your blood glucose to drop abnormally low (hypoglycaemia – below 4mmol/l). You may be asked to test your blood glucose more frequently, before meals, if taking Gliclazide or Glimepiride. If you notice your blood glucose drops below 5mmol/l, report to your Practice Diabetes Team because this is a sign Pioglitazone is working well and your Gliclazide or Glimepiride can be reduced.

Although Pioglitazone is associated with weight gain, the international guidelines for diabetes recommend combining it with other diabetes organ-protective medications that help with weight loss (Canagliflozin, Empagliflozin or Dapagliflozin). Taking both medications alongside Metformin and a Statin, while reflecting on ways to improve sleep quality, movement and activity and finding a healthy eating pattern that you can sustain, is described as an 'insurance policy' to protect your blood vessels and heart.

Results from four studies using the lower doses regarding weight gain and HbA1c reduction:

15mg: mean weight gain 1.5kg, mean HbA1c reduction 11mmol/mol

30mg: mean weight gain 2.5kg, mean HbA1c reduction 14mmol/mol

Resources to help counterbalance your weight:

- ask you Practice or Pharmacy to refer you to the free [NHS Digital Weight Programme](#)
- take a look at the [NHS Better Health website](#) which has resources in the following categories: lose weight, quit smoking, get active, drink less
- the [PITstop 5-star lifestyle booklet](#) helps you reflect on how you live your life and are you ready to make healthy changes. It provides resources to help you achieve your goal

Any notes

