

Information for patients on SGLT-2 inhibitors

What are they?

SGLT-2 inhibitors are a group of medication used to treat Type 2 diabetes. They work on kidneys to help lower your blood glucose levels.

They have added benefits that include protecting the kidneys and heart, reducing the risk of heart failure, heart attacks and strokes in individuals at most risk.

Examples include *canagliflozin*, *dapagliflozin* and *empagliflozin*.

SIDE EFFECTS

Very common side effects

- Nausea
- Constipation
- Genital and urinary infection
 - The medicine increases urine glucose, therefore increasing the risk of infection such as thrush in the vagina or penis.
 - This is easily treated by a pharmacist or GP.
 - Wash the genital area with warm water using non-perfumed soap and avoid wearing tight underwear. In severe cases, Fournier's gangrene can occur

Uncommon side effects

- Dehydration
 - The medicine increases your urine volume, so you can become dehydrated easily
 - You must drink at least 2 litres of liquids / non-sugary drinks a day
- Skin reactions
- Diabetic ketoacidosis (high glucose levels)
- Lower limb amputations
 - If you have been told you have an 'at risk foot' you should clarify with your doctor if you should start or remain on one of these medicines.
 - If you have an active foot ulcer or circulatory problem in your leg you should stop these medicines.

Sick day rules for SGLT-2 inhibitors

- Stay hydrated
- Do not fast - maintain carbohydrate intake
- If you are unable to eat / drink or are vomiting, replace meals with sugary fluids or ice cream
- Never stop insulin
- You may need to stop taking some medications during the period you are unwell
 - You should stop them if unwell especially in the presence of vomiting, diarrhoea, or fever
 - You can restart them when you are better, however if you remain unwell after 48 hrs seek medical advice from your GP/Pharmacist/NHS
- Seek medical attention if you are unable to control your blood glucose (persistently over 18mmol/L) or unable to stay hydrated due to vomiting

Further information and support

- Diabetes UK
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/treating-your-diabetes/tablets-and-medication/sglt2-inhibitors>
- <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-medication/sglt2-inhibitors.html>