Diabetes Medications, Mode of Action, and Times to Take Them

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- Some people with type 2 diabetes can control their blood sugar with a healthy meal plan and regular exercise. But sometimes, in addition of healthy eating and exercise diabetes pills are also needed.

- The pill or pills prescribed by your doctor will not “take care” of your diabetes on their own you will need to “help” them.

- What can I do to help them? Taking your medication as prescribed, following a healthy meal plan, and exercising regularly.
Presently, the doctors have available a wide arsenal of medicines at their disposal and each one of them have a different mode of action.

- Your doctor will decide which medicine is best for you based on your age, your health, your lifestyle, and your blood sugar levels during the day.
Types of Medications, Mode of Action, and Examples

- **Sulfonylureas.** Stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin. Take them 15-30 minutes before a meal.  
  Example: Glypizide/Glucotrol

- **Meglitinides.** Stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin. Take them 15-30 minutes before a meal. If you skip a meal skip the dose.  
  Example: Repaglinide/Prandin

- **Biguanides.** Keep the liver from making too much sugar, especially during the night. Take them with meals or after meals.  
  Example: Metformin/Glucophage
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- **Thiazolidinediones.** Make muscle more sensitive to insulin. Take them with or without meals. **Examples:** Pioglitazone/Actos and Rosiglitazone/Avandia

- **Alpha-Glucosidase Inhibitors.** Slow the digestion of some carbohydrates. Take them with the first bite of a meal. **Example:** Acarbose/Precose

- **Aminoacid Derivatives.** Examples: Take them 15-30 minutes before eating. **Example:** Nateglinide/Starlix
Important Points about Medications

Before start taking your medication ask the doctor:
 a) How much to take, b) When and how often to take it, c) What to do if you forget a dose and d) Possible side effects.

- One of the best things you can do is memorize the name of your medication or write the name in a piece of paper and the times you take it, especially when you go to your doctor(s).

- All medicines can cause side effects, even the ones you can buy over the counter; but many times the side effects are temporary. If the side effects persist call your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before stop taking your medicine or decreasing the dose on your own.