



# ORAL TREATMENTS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

## WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Food that you eat releases a type of sugar called **glucose** into your blood. Your pancreas makes a hormone called **insulin** which helps sugar enter cells in the body so it can be used as energy or stored for later use. People with type 2 diabetes have a **high** amount of sugar in their blood because their pancreas does not **produce** enough insulin, or their cells do not **respond** to insulin properly (insulin resistance).

### DID YOU KNOW?

**220K**

There are at least **220,000** people living with type 2 diabetes in Singapore.<sup>3</sup>



**One in four** people with diabetes **do not know** that they have it.<sup>4</sup>



Taking a blood test is the only way to know if you have diabetes. People with a higher risk of developing diabetes should get tested **once every 3 years**.<sup>1</sup>

**Many** people can be living with type 2 diabetes and not know it, as the symptoms may take years to appear and may not always make you feel unwell. When symptoms are present, they can include:<sup>1</sup>

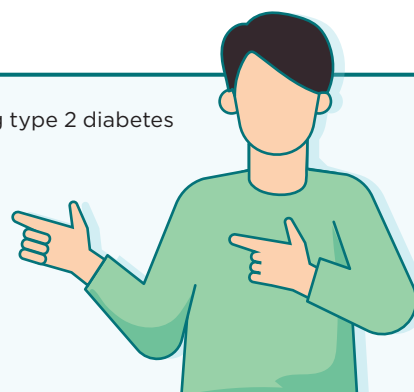


Over time, high blood sugar levels can cause **serious health complications** including heart disease, stroke, chronic kidney disease, nerve damage, and eye problems. However, with the right treatment and care, people with type 2 diabetes can live a healthy life and complications can be **avoided**.

## WHAT ARE YOUR RISKS OF HAVING TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Types 2 diabetes is thought to be linked to your family history and lifestyle. Your risk of having type 2 diabetes is **higher**<sup>1,2</sup> if you:

- are 40 years or older
- have a body mass index (BMI) value of 23 or higher
- have a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- have higher than normal blood sugar levels, but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes (pre-diabetes)
- lead an inactive lifestyle, or
- ever had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes).



## HOW IS TYPE 2 DIABETES TREATED?

Type 2 diabetes can be managed by **maintaining** a healthy lifestyle. **Many** people will require glucose-lowering drugs to keep their blood sugar levels in the optimal range. Your doctor will assess your blood sugar level, treatment preferences and any other existing health conditions, and advise which treatment is suitable for you.

Most patients who need glucose-lowering drugs start with **oral** drugs. There are many types available and they work in different ways. If a patient's blood sugar level is still higher than their target despite treatment, doctors may prescribe a different drug or **add on** other glucose-lowering drugs to the existing treatment.<sup>5</sup>

### MANAGING TYPE 2 DIABETES

Practise a **healthy lifestyle** by:



Exercising regularly



Eating healthily



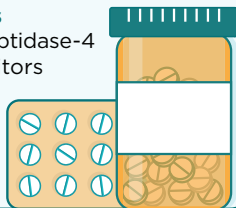
Quitting smoking (if you smoke)



Drinking less alcohol

Different types of **oral diabetes** drugs are available:

- Biguanides (**metformin**)
- Sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 (**SGLT2**) inhibitors
- **Sulfonylureas**
- Dipeptidyl-peptidase-4 (**DPP-4**) inhibitors
- Others



**Injectable** diabetes drugs<sup>^</sup>



<sup>^</sup> More information is available in the factsheet on "Injectable treatments for type 2 diabetes"<sup>6</sup>

### SUBSIDISED ORAL DIABETES DRUGS ARE AVAILABLE

DRUG TYPE	SUBSIDISED DRUG NAME	
Biguanides	✓ Metformin	
Sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors <sup>^</sup>	✓ Empagliflozin	
Dipeptidyl-peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitors	✓ Linagliptin	✓ Sitagliptin
Sulfonylureas	✓ Chlorpropamide*	✓ Glipizide
	✓ Glibenclamide*	✓ Tolbutamide
	✓ Gliclazide	

Treatment costs are subsidised by **40% to 75%** for eligible patients



\*Not commonly used in Singapore ^Subsidised dapagliflozin is available until August 2024

### KEY MESSAGES

Oral diabetes drugs are **safe** and **effective**. Many of them are subsidised, making treatment more affordable. The treatment that you need will depend on different factors such as your blood sugar level, treatment preferences and any other health conditions you may have. Discuss with your **doctor** which treatment is suitable for you, and your concerns. You can also speak to a **medical social worker** if you need further financial assistance for any treatments, or you can reach out to **local patient support groups**<sup>7</sup> if you want to meet people with type 2 diabetes and share your experiences.

#### Sources

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5. ACE Clinical Guidance on type 2 diabetes mellitus – personalising management with non-insulin medications, 2023
6. ACE Patient Factsheet on *Injectable treatments for type 2 diabetes*, 2023
7. Diabetes Singapore



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