



Update on Diabetes Therapy

Why is Treatment Important?

Diabetes mellitus is becoming one of the most common diseases in the United States. There are a total of 20.8 million children and adults who have diabetes. Improving blood sugar control in patients with diabetes is an important way to decrease the complications of diabetes. Recently, several new drugs became available to help manage diabetes, including Byetta[®], Symlin[®] and Januvia[®].

Byetta[®]

Byetta[®], or exenatide, is used in patients with Type 2 diabetes who are taking metformin, with or without a sulfonylurea. It is given as an injection under the skin in the arm, thigh or stomach. The dose starts at 5 mg twice daily, given within 60 minutes before the morning and nighttime meals. After one month of therapy, the dose can be increased to 10 mg twice daily. The most common side effects are nausea, low blood sugar, vomiting and diarrhea.

Symlin[®]

Symlin[®], or pramlintide acetate, is used in patients with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes on insulin. It is an injection given under the skin for patients. Patients with stomach problems should not use Symlin[®]. The most common side effects are nausea, anorexia, vomiting and abdominal pain. Severe low blood sugar can result from taking Symlin[®] with mealtime insulin. When starting Symlin[®], the dose of mealtime insulin should be lowered. Symlin[®] should not be mixed with insulin. It must be given as a separate injection. Patients should tell their doctors if they experience low blood sugar.

Januvia[®]

Januvia[®], or sitagliptin, is used as a single drug or combination with other drugs in patients with Type 2 diabetes. Januvia[®] should not be used to treat Type 1 diabetes. Januvia[®] is dosed at 100 mg once daily. The dose should be lowered in patients with kidney disease. The most common side effect is headache.

Diabetes is becoming more common, but there are new options to help improve blood glucose control. Patients should work with their doctor and pharmacist to develop and follow a treatment plan. Patients should inform their doctor and pharmacist of any new side effect they may have and continue to monitor their blood sugar levels when taking these new drugs.

For more information, ask your pharmacist!

This information provided by the Michigan Pharmacists Association and:

