

T2D Medication Overview



Do all people need medicine?

Some people manage T2D with lifestyle changes alone; many need medicines to reach safe blood sugar targets.

What are the main medicine types?

- Oral medicines: metformin, SGLT2 inhibitors, DPP-4 inhibitors, sulfonylureas, TZDs
- Injectables: GLP-1 receptor agonists (daily or weekly)
- Insulin: several types for different timing and needs

Which is first-line?

- Metformin is usually the first medication unless contraindicated
- Insulin is required when oral agents and injectables do not control glucose or in acute situations

Do any protect the heart & kidneys?

Yes. SGLT2 inhibitors and some GLP-1 agonists are recommended for people with heart or kidney disease.

How do I know if my medicine is working?

- Regular blood glucose monitoring (SMBG or CGM)
- Periodic A1C tests
- Observing for fewer symptoms like fatigue, thirst, or frequent urination
- Your healthcare team will review your response and adjusts your doses as needed

What side effects should I watch for?

- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea (common with some oral meds or GLP-1 agonists)
- Low blood sugar (mainly with insulin or sulfonylureas)
- Weight changes or swelling (specific to some medications)
- Report any unusual or severe side effects to your healthcare team promptly

Where can I find reliable information?

- T2D Network
- Family doctor or endocrinologist
- Diabetes educator or nurse
- Dietitian
- Pharmacist