DIABETES DRUGS: SULFONYLUREAS

Sulfonylurea drugs stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin, thus helping to control high blood sugar levels in patients with diabetes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Name</th>
<th>Brand Name(s)</th>
<th>Strengths (mg)</th>
<th>Usual Doses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glyburide</td>
<td>Micronase</td>
<td>2.5, 5</td>
<td>2.5 to 20 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DiaBeta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glyburide, Micronized</td>
<td>Glynase PresTab</td>
<td>1.5, 3, 6</td>
<td>1.5 to 12 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glipizide</td>
<td>Glucotrol</td>
<td>5, 10</td>
<td>5 to 40 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glipizide, Ext Rel</td>
<td>Glucotrol XL</td>
<td>2.5, 5, 10</td>
<td>5 to 20 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glimepiride</td>
<td>Amaryl</td>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
<td>1 to 8 mg/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POTENTIAL USES:

1) Diabetes Mellitus, Hyperglycemia

CONTRAINDICATIONS: (Do not use if any of these conditions are present)

1) Known allergic reaction to sulfonylurea drugs

FDA PREGNANCY CATEGORY:

- Glyburide: B (Presumed safety based on animal studies)
- All Others: C (Uncertain safety)

ADVERSE REACTIONS

1) Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
2) Weight gain

MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

1) Hemoglobin A1C (as for all diabetic patients)

Disclaimer: This handout is provided as an educational service for patients. It is not all-inclusive, and is not intended to replace other sources of drug information. Please refer to each drug’s package insert for complete drug prescribing information.
COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1) Can my blood sugar drop too low while taking a sulfonylurea drug?

YES. In most cases, these episodes of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) are mild. However, severe reactions can occur, especially in older patients or in patients with advanced kidney disease. Common symptoms of hypoglycemia include sweating, palpitations (heart fluttering), shaking, dizziness, disorientation, and hunger. If you take a sulfonylurea drug and experience any of these symptoms, you should check your blood sugar immediately. You should also eat or drink something containing simple carbohydrates, such as milk, juice, or a glucose tablet. If you confirm that your blood sugar was low, for the rest of that day, you should check your blood sugar frequently in case hypoglycemia returns.

Any episodes of hypoglycemia should eventually be reported to your doctor. Severe episodes (requiring assistance from another person) should be reported immediately, and may require treatment in the hospital.

2) Is there anything I can do to PREVENT hypoglycemia while taking a sulfonylurea drug?

YES. All patients who take one of these drugs should carry a source of carbohydrates with them at all times. Nonprescription glucose tablets and gels are available in most pharmacies; alternatively, simple sugar candies or juices can be used. Patients must be especially careful in situations where a low blood sugar could be dangerous, such as while driving a car or operating heavy machinery.

3) Will I gain weight on a sulfonylurea drug?

Some patients taking sulfonylurea drugs do experience a mild increase in body weight. However, this does not need to happen. If you pay careful attention to your diet and exercise regularly, you should not gain weight while taking these drugs.

Disclaimer: This handout is provided as an educational service for patients. It is not all-inclusive, and is not intended to replace other sources of drug information. Please refer to each drug’s package insert for complete drug prescribing information.