

Patient Education

Diabetes Care Center



Exenatide

(Byetta)

**Exenatide is a synthetic
(man-made) hormone that
helps release insulin when
blood glucose is present.**

**It is an injected medicine for
adults with type 2 diabetes.**

It is not insulin.

Exenatide:

- Will help balance your blood glucose after a meal**
- Will make you feel full more quickly**
- May reduce your A1C (a test of your blood glucose control over a 3-month period)**

What does exenatide do?

Exenatide:

- Tells your pancreas to make insulin. This keeps your blood glucose more stable.
- Decreases the amount of the hormone *glucagon* your liver releases after you eat. Less glucagon means lower blood glucose.
- May reduce your appetite and make you feel full more quickly. You may lose weight if you use exenatide.
- Can slow the movement of food through your stomach. This helps prevent high blood glucose after a meal.

How should I use exenatide?

- Take exenatide as prescribed. If you have been taking a sulfonylurea, like glyburide or glipizide, your doctor may decrease your dose or tell you to stop taking it. Do not decrease or stop taking your sulfonylurea drug unless your doctor tells you to.
- Your first dose of exenatide will likely be 5 micrograms (mcg) 2 times a day. After 1 month, your health care provider may increase your dose to 10 mcg 2 times a day.
- Take exenatide 30 to 60 minutes before 2 of your major meals. These meals should be at least 6 hours apart. Many people take exenatide before breakfast and dinner.
- Exenatide comes in a prefilled pen for easy injection. You do not have to adjust your dose based on your blood glucose, the number of carbohydrates in your meal, or whether or not you exercise.
- Inject exenatide into the fatty part of your abdomen, thigh, or upper arm.
- During the first few weeks of using exenatide, monitor your blood glucose before each meal, 2 hours after each meal, and at bedtime, or as directed by your diabetes team.

If You Miss a Dose of Exenatide

- Wait to take your usual dose until the next meal you would normally use it with.
- Do not take more than 1 dose at a time.
- Never take exenatide after a meal.

What if I miss a dose?

Wait until the next meal you would normally use exenatide with. Take your usual dose. **Never take more than prescribed. Never take exenatide after a meal.**

What are side effects of exenatide?

Nausea

- Nausea is a common side effect when first starting to use exenatide. Many people find the nausea goes away after a couple of weeks.
- You will start exenatide at a low dose to lower your risk of nausea.
- Tell your diabetes care team if you have moderate to severe nausea that does not get better after 3 days.

Other Common Side Effects You May Have

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Upper stomach discomfort
- *Hypoglycemia* (very low blood glucose) is a common side effect of exenatide. Signs of hypoglycemia include:
 - Shakiness
 - Sweating
 - Nausea
 - Extreme hunger
 - Pounding heart
 - Blurred vision
 - Confusion

Hypoglycemia may also occur if you eat less than usual, drink alcohol, or exercise. Treat hypoglycemia the same way you would treat any low blood glucose.

Rare Side Effect

Call your diabetes team at 206-598-4882 right away if you have severe abdominal pain. You may also be sick to your stomach and vomiting. This may be a sign of acute *pancreatitis* (inflamed pancreas).

Pancreatitis is a rare side effect, but it is a serious condition that requires medical attention right away. You are at higher risk of pancreatitis if you have had gallstones, use alcohol, or have high triglyceride levels.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Diabetes Care Center:
206-598-4882

Are there any times I should not use exenatide?

Do **not** use exenatide:

- After a meal
- If your blood glucose is lower than ____mg/dL before a meal
- If you are pregnant or nursing

How should I store exenatide?

- Keep unopened pens in the refrigerator.
- Keep the pen you are using at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 30 days. Throw it away after 30 days even if there is still some medicine in it.
- Do not freeze exenatide.
- Do not use exenatide if it is cloudy or discolored, or if it is past its expiration date.

Does exenatide affect other medicines?

- Exenatide is safe to take with diabetes medicines such as metformin, sulfonylureas (glyburide, glipizide), or insulin, as prescribed by your doctor.
- Exenatide can slow down how fast your body absorbs some medicines. Ask your health care provider whether you need to change the times you take certain medicines to adjust for this.
 - If you take birth control pills or antibiotics, you may be told to take them at least 1 hour before using exenatide. If the antibiotic you are taking should be taken with food, have a snack or take the antibiotic with a meal that you do not use exenatide before.
 - Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and other pain medicines 1 hour before using exenatide.
 - If you are taking warfarin (Coumadin), digoxin, or transplant medicines, talk with your diabetes care team about the best times to take them. It is important to take these medicines as directed and to have lab work done regularly.

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Published: 10/2009, 02/2012

Clinician Review: 02/2012

Reprints on Health Online: <http://healthonline.washington.edu>