



# Liraglutide

(Victoza)

Liraglutide 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.

Liraglutide will:

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

## What does liraglutide do?

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

## How should I use liraglutide?

- Take liraglutide 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.
- At first, your prescribed dose of liraglutide will likely be 0.6 milligrams (mg) once a day. After 1 week, your provider may increase your daily dose to 1.2 mg.
- You can take liraglutide with or without food.
- Liraglutide comes in a prefilled pen for easy injection. You do not have to adjust your liraglutide dose based on your blood glucose, the number of carbohydrates in your meal, or whether or not you exercise.
- Inject liraglutide into the fatty part of your abdomen, thigh, or upper arm.
- During the first few weeks of using liraglutide, monitor your blood glucose before each meal, 2 hours after each meal, and at bedtime, or as directed by your diabetes team.

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**If You Miss a Dose of Liraglutide**

- **Take it as soon as you remember.**
- **But, if it is more than 3 or 4 hours past your usual time to take it, wait until your next scheduled dose. Then, take your usual dose.**

**What if I miss a dose?**

- Take it as soon as you remember. But, if it is more than 3 or 4 hours past your usual time to take it, wait until your next scheduled dose. Then, take your usual dose.

**What are the side effects of liraglutide?**

*Nausea*

- Nausea is a common side effect when first starting liraglutide. Many people find the nausea goes away after a couple of weeks.
- You will start liraglutide 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 Side Effects You May Have*

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Upper stomach discomfort
- *Hypoglycemia* (very low blood glucose) is a rare side effect of liraglutide when it is used alone. But your risk may be higher if you:
  - Also use other drugs that make your pancreas release more insulin.
  - Use insulin. The Food and Drug Administration has not approved using liraglutide if you also use insulin. But, some doctors do prescribe liraglutide for insulin users. This is called an “off-label” use of a medicine. It means the medicine is not approved for some conditions, even though it is an effective treatment.

Some signs of hypoglycemia are:

- 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 this hypoglycemia the same way you would treat any low blood glucose.

## 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

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### *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.

### How should I store liraglutide?

- 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 it still has some medicine in it.
- Do not freeze liraglutide.
- Do not use liraglutide if it is cloudy or discolored, or if it is past its expiration date.

### Does liraglutide affect other medicines?

- Liraglutide is safe to take with diabetes medicines such as metformin, sulfonylureas (glyburide, glipizide), or insulin, as prescribed by your doctor.
- Liraglutide can slow how fast your body absorbs some medicines. Ask your health care provider if 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 liraglutide.
  - Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and other pain medicines 1 hour before using liraglutide.
  - 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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#### Diabetes Care Center

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