

Symlin

Pramlintide acetate

This handout describes Symlin, a hormone that works with insulin to control how quickly glucose enters the blood after meals.

What is Symlin?

- Symlin is a synthetic (man-made) hormone. It works with insulin to control how quickly glucose enters the blood after meals.
- Symlin is an injected medicine. It is used in addition to insulin by some adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes to help control blood glucose.
- Symlin will help balance blood glucose after a meal, make you feel full more quickly, and allow you to lower your insulin doses. It will likely improve your A1C (a test that shows your blood glucose control over a 3-month period).

What does Symlin do?

- Symlin prevents the after-meal rise in *glucagon*, a hormone your liver produces that increases blood glucose. When Symlin is used with insulin, your blood glucose may be more stable after a meal.
- Symlin slows the movement of food through your stomach, which may slow the rise in your blood glucose.
- Symlin can also reduce your appetite and make you feel full more quickly. You may lose weight if you use Symlin.



Symlin controls how quickly glucose enters the blood after meals.

How do I use Symlin?

- Take Symlin right before a major meal. A major meal has at least 250 calories or 30 grams of carbohydrate.
- Symlin injections are similar to insulin injections. Inject it into the fatty part of your stomach or upper leg, at least 2 inches from the insulin injection site you use at the same meal.

- **NEVER** mix Symlin and insulin. Inject them separately.
- During the first few weeks of using Symlin, check your blood glucose levels before each meal, 2 hours after each meal, and at bedtime, or as directed by your diabetes team.
- When you start using Symlin, you may be told to lower your mealtime insulin dose to half of what you have been taking.
- Take Symlin as prescribed. The amount of Symlin you take depends on whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Your dose may change over time, depending on how long you use it.

What if I miss a dose?

Wait until your next major meal and take your usual dose. Never take more than prescribed. **Never take Symlin after a meal.**

What are the side effects of Symlin?

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia (very low blood glucose) is a common side effect. You are at higher risk for hypoglycemia if you have type 1 diabetes.

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.

Nausea

- Nausea is a common side effect when first using Symlin.
- Many people find the nausea goes away after a couple of weeks on Symlin.
- You will start Symlin 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

Other side effects you may have are:

- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach

Do NOT use Symlin if:

- Your meal has less than 250 calories or 30 grams of carbohydrates.
- You are sick and cannot eat a normal meal.
- Your blood glucose is lower than ____ mg/dL before a meal.
- You are pregnant or nursing.

How should I store Symlin?

- Keep unopened vials in the refrigerator.
- Keep your open vials at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 28 days.
- Do not freeze Symlin.
- Do not use a vial if the Symlin looks cloudy or discolored.

Does Symlin affect other medicines?

- Symlin is safe to take with insulin and oral diabetes medicines such as metformin and sulfonylureas (glyburide, glipizide).
- Do **not** use atropine, other digestive medicines, and acarbose while you are taking Symlin. Tell your diabetes care team if you take these medicines.
- Symlin can slow down how quickly your body absorbs some medicines. Ask your diabetes care team whether you need to change the times you take certain medicines.
 - If you take pain medicines, you may be told to take them 1 hour before or 2 hours after taking Symlin.
 - If you take 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.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Diabetes Care Center:
206-598-4882