



If you have type 2 diabetes, your doctor will consider

prescribing medicines that help keep your blood sugar levels in a normal range.

To help you and your doctor choose a diabetes medicine if you need one, *Consumer Reports* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of a 30-page report you can access on the Internet at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org. You can also learn about other drugs we've analyzed on this free Web site. Our independent evaluations are based on scientific reviews conducted by the Oregon Health and Science University-based Drug Effectiveness Review Project. Grants from the Engelberg Foundation and National Library of Medicine help fund *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*.

DO YOU NEED A DIABETES DRUG?

Many people with type 2 diabetes can control their blood sugar by losing weight, eating more healthily, getting more exercise, and other lifestyle changes. Some can avoid taking drugs for many years. But, over time, most people with type 2 diabetes will need to take a medicine, too. Many people with diabetes also have heart disease, high blood pressure, and/or elevated cholesterol. Such people will need to take medicines for these conditions as well as a diabetes drug.

Our Recommendations

Our evaluation of the diabetes medicines found the following:

- *Newer drugs are no better.* One older type of drug, the sulfonylureas (glyburide, glipizide, and glimepiride), and an older drug named metformin work just as well as four newer classes.
- *Newer drugs are no safer.* All diabetes pills have the potential to cause adverse effects, both minor and serious. The drugs' side effects should be an important factor in your choice.
- *Newer drugs are more expensive.* The newer diabetes medicines cost many times more than the older ones.
- *Taking two diabetes drugs can improve blood sugar control.* Many people with diabetes do not get enough help from one drug. Two drugs may be necessary.

Taking effectiveness, safety, side effects, dosing, and cost into consideration, we have chosen the following as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*:

- *Metformin* – alone or with glipizide or glimepiride
- *Glipizide* and *Glipizide Sustained Release* – alone or with metformin
- *Glimepiride* – alone or with metformin

These medicines are available as low-cost generics. We recommend that you try metformin first unless your health status prevents it.

This information and our report were last updated in July 2007.

How the Diabetes Drugs Compare*

	HbA1c Reduction (percentage points)	LDL Cholesterol Change (mg/dL)	HDL Cholesterol Change (mg/dL)	Triglyceride Change (mg/dL)	Risk of Hypoglycemia (% of people)	Weight Change (lbs)
Glyburide	▼ 1.3-1.8	◆	◆	▼ 10-20	10-22%	▲ 5-10
Glipizide	▼ 1.3-1.8	◆	◆	▼ 10-20	10-15%	▲ 5-10
Glimepiride	▼ 1.3-1.8	◆	◆	▼ 10-20	9-14%	▲ 5-10
Metformin	▼ 0.9-1.4	▲ 5-7	◆	▼ 15-25	0-7%	◆
Pioglitazone (Actos)	▼ 0.8-1.2	▲ 8-12	▲ 5	▼ 35-45	0-3%	▲ 5-10
Rosiglitazone (Avandia)	▼ 0.9-1.4	▲ 12-15	▲ 3	▲ 10-20	4-11%	▲ 5-10
Repaglinide (Prandin)	▼ 0.8-2.0	◆	◆	▼ 10-15	11-32%	▲ 5-10
Nateglinide (Starlix)	▼ 0.3-0.8	IE	IE	IE	13%	IE
Acarbose (Precose)	▼ 0.6-0.9	◆	◆	▼ 10-15	0-5%	◆
Miglitol (Glyset)	▼ 0.4-0.9	IE	IE	IE	IE	IE
Sitagliptin (Januvia)	▼ 0.6-0.8	◆	◆	◆	Low	◆

*Selected drugs and measures. For the complete table, see the full diabetes report at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org. A down arrow (▼) means a decrease or decline; an up arrow (▲) means increase; and a diamond (◆) means no meaningful effect or change. IE=insufficient evidence. Brand names are not given for drugs available as generics. Numbers are averages based on multiple studies. Definitions: mg/dl=milligrams per deciliter of blood; mmHg=millimeters mercury; HbA1c=hemoglobin A1c; LDL=low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; HDL= high-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

Cost of Diabetes Drugs*

Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name (or Generic)	Number of Pills (Per day) ¹	Total Daily Dose ¹	Average Monthly Cost ²
Glyburide 5mg tablet	Generic	One	5mg	\$12
Glyburide 5mg tablet	Micronase	One	5mg	\$41
Glyburide micronized 3mg tablet	Glynase	One	3mg	\$42
Glyburide micronized 3mg tablet	Generic	One	3mg	\$12
Glipizide 10mg tablet	Glucotrol	One	10mg	\$34
CR BEST BUY Glipizide 10mg tablet	Generic	One	10mg	\$11
Glipizide 10mg tablet, Sustained Release	Glucotrol	One	10mg	\$39
CR BEST BUY Glipizide 10mg tablet, Sustained Release	Generic	One	10mg	\$23 to \$29
Glimepiride 2mg tablet	Amaryl	One	2mg	\$29
CR BEST BUY Glimepiride 2mg tablet	Generic	One	2mg	\$18
Metformin 1000mg tablet	Glucophage	Two	2000mg	\$134
CR BEST BUY Metformin 1000mg tablet	Generic	Two	2000mg	\$45
Sitagliptin 50mg tablet	Januvia	One	50mg	\$201
Pioglitazone 30mg tablet	Actos	One	30mg	\$221
Rosiglitazone 4mg tablet	Avandia	One-Two	4 mg-8mg	\$131-\$262
Repaglinide 2mg tablet	Prandin	Three	6mg	\$156
Nateglinide 60mg tablet	Starlix	Three	180mg	\$157
Acarbose 100mg tablet	Precose	Three	300 mg	\$124
Miglitol 100mg tablet	Glyset	Three	300mg	\$113
Metformin+glipizide 250mg/2.5mg	Metaglip	Two	250/2.5-500/5 mg	\$71
Metformin+glipizide 250mg/2.5mg	Generic	Two	500/5mg	\$57
Metformin+glyburide 250mg/1.25mg	Glucovance	Two	500/2.5mg	\$72
Metformin+glyburide 250mg/1.25mg	Generic	Two	500/2.5mg	\$44
Pioglitazone+metformin 15mg /850mg	Actoplus Met	One	850/15mg	\$105
Rosiglitazone+glimepiride 4mg/1mg tablet	Avandaryl	One	4/1mg	\$144
Rosiglitazone+metformin 2mg/500mg	Avandamet	Two	4/1000mg	\$152
Sitagliptin +metformin 50mg/500mg	Janumet	Two	100/1000mg	\$106

* Selected drugs and doses. For the complete table, see our full diabetes report at www.CRBESTBUYDRUGS.org.

1. As commonly or typically recommended.

2. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for May 2007, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite.