

HOW ORAL MEDICATIONS WORK

TRANSCRIPT

Medication can play an important role in managing your diabetes. There are many oral medications that can be the right option for you. You and your diabetes care team will decide what medication is right for you.

Oral medications work with the other parts of your management plan to help you achieve your blood glucose goals. To understand how your oral medications help control your blood glucose, let's see what happens when you eat.

Most of the food you eat changes to glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose enters the bloodstream causing your blood glucose level to rise. As your blood glucose rises, the pancreas releases insulin. Insulin works like a key to open the cells and let glucose enter. The glucose is used for energy or it is stored in the cells for later use.

Normally, our bodies maintain a balance of glucose and insulin in the bloodstream. As insulin works to move the glucose out of your bloodstream and into the cells, your blood glucose level drops. However, you still need glucose for energy.

To keep your blood glucose level from dropping too low in between meals, your pancreas releases glucagon. Glucagon triggers the liver to release stored glucose which can be used by the cells for energy.

In people who don't have diabetes, the body keeps blood glucose in a healthy range, no matter what, or when, you've eaten.

But when you have type 2 diabetes this process is out of balance, and too much glucose builds up in the bloodstream. This is called high blood glucose or hyperglycemia.

The causes of type 2 diabetes vary from person to person. Your pancreas might not make enough insulin, or your pancreas might not release insulin soon enough after you've eaten. Your liver might release too much stored glucose into your bloodstream, or your cells may have trouble taking in glucose because they can't use insulin. This is called insulin resistance.

Today, medications are being developed that try to treat each of these conditions, keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range. There are several classes of oral medications used to treat diabetes. Each works differently to control your blood glucose level.

Talk to your diabetes care team about what medication or medications you are taking to help meet your diabetes management goals.