

Medication Name

Acarbose

precose

Therapeutic Use

Type 2 diabetes mellitus, with or without drug therapy with insulin, a sulfonylurea, or metformin (Glucophage)

Adverse Drug Reactions

Gastrointestinal effects (distention, flatus, hyperactive bowel sounds, diarrhea)

Hypoglycemia (combination therapy with insulin or a sulfonylurea)

Liver dysfunction

Anemia

Nursing Interventions

Monitor hyperactive bowel sounds, distention, and diarrhea.

Report persistent gastric distress.

Monitor for signs of hypoglycemia (diaphoresis, tachycardia, fatigue, excessive hunger, tremors).

Measure liver enzymes at baseline, every 3 months for the first year, and periodically thereafter.

Stop drug therapy for indications of liver injury.

Monitor CBC

Watch for indications of anemia (pallor, fatigue, shortness of breath).

Recommend iron-rich foods and supplements accordingly.

Drug Administration

Give with the first bite of food, three times a day.

Tell clients who skip a meal to also skip the dose usually taken with that meal and to take only one dose at the next meal.

Patient Education

Warn client about the gastric side effects of alpha- glucosidase inhibitors.

Follow the diet regimen recommended by the provider.

Wear a medical alert bracelet.

Report dark urine, abdominal pain, vomiting, or fatigue.

Report pallor, fatigue, or shortness of breath.

Watch for and report symptoms of hypoglycemia.

Test blood glucose to confirm

Consume oral (Glucotabs) if necessary

Retest in 15 min and repeat if still low.

Carry dextrose tablets at all times.

Contraindications

Gastrointestinal disorders (such as inflammatory bowel disease), obstruction, ulceration

Precautions

Hepatic impairment

Gastrointestinal distress

Not typically used in U.S.

Interactions

Insulin and sulfonylureas increase the risk of hypoglycemia.

