

Diabetes self-management information series for primary care

GLP-1RAs

Non-insulin injectable medications

What are non-insulin injectable medications?

These are medications that are given by injection, but they are not insulin. They mimic the effect of the body's incretin hormones. Incretins are gut hormones which are released whenever we eat carbohydrate or sugary foods.

One of these is called glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1); hence the name of the class is GLP-1 receptor agonists (RA), or GLP-1RAs.

What do they do?

In people with type 2 diabetes, the effect of incretins is often reduced. Taking a GLP-1RA will:

- increase the amount of insulin released after a meal
- slow the emptying of the stomach (leaving you feeling full for longer)
- reduce the amount of glucose produced by the liver

This leads to improved blood glucose levels and some weight loss.

Who can use GLP-1RA?

Adults with type 2 diabetes who are taking metformin or a sulphonylurea. It should not be used in people with chronic kidney disease or a history of pancreatitis.

For people commencing Byetta® or Ozempic®, complete this NDSS form: [medication change](#) (to access needles).

GLP-1RAs currently available in Australia

Trulicity®

Dosage: Once weekly

Drug name: Dulaglutide

Note: If you forget your dose on the day, take it the next day.

How to inject video: trulicity.com/how-to-use/non-insulin-pen/



Ozempic®

Dosage: Once weekly

Drug name: Semaglutide

Note: Starting dose 0.25mg for 4 weeks. Maintenance 0.5mg (for 4 weeks) up to 1mg per week if needed.

How to inject video: ozempicpro.com/getting-patients-started/ozempic-pen/ozempic-pen-instructions-for-use.html



Byetta®

Dosage: Twice daily (30-60 minutes before breakfast and evening meal)

Drug name: Exenatide

Note: Starting dose 5mcg. Maintenance 10mcg.

How to inject video: youtube.com/watch?v=7g7fxMnUrOw



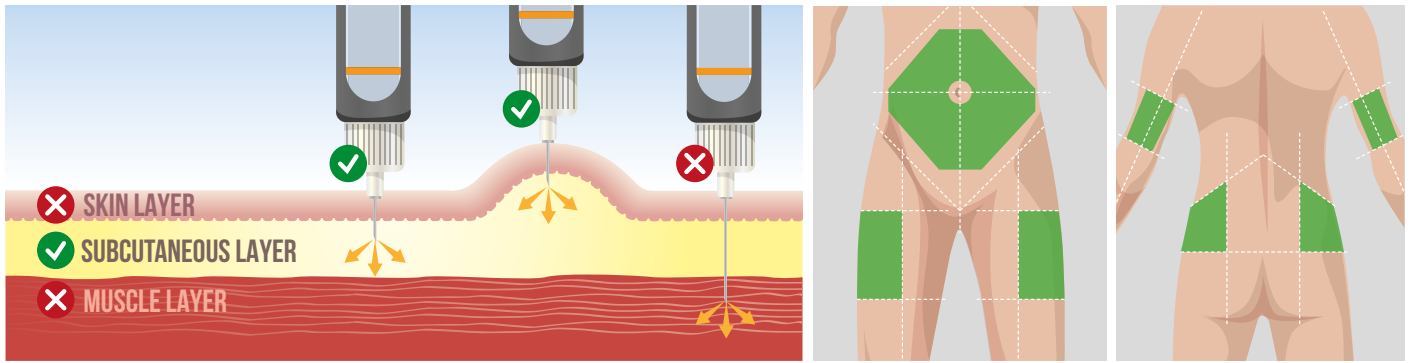
Bydureon®

Dosage: Once weekly

Drug name: Exenatide ER

Note: New device will be available soon

Note: Victoza (Liraglutide) is available in Australia but it is not PBS listed for use in type 2 diabetes.



How to inject a GLP-1RA

The aim is to inject the medication into the fat layer just under the skin. Avoid scars, stretch marks and muscle.

Each device is pre-filled. Ensure you have the right dose.

- Trulicity® and Bydureon® come with their own needle. Byetta® and Ozempic® use 4mm insulin pen needles.
- Use a new needle each injection.
- Dispose of needles in a sharps container.
- Ask a diabetes educator, pharmacist or practice nurse to show you how to do your first injection.

Side effects of GLP-1RAs

- nausea
- headache, dizziness and feeling jittery
- weight loss
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- constipation

Tell your doctor immediately if you experience the following:

- persistent abdominal pain
- vomiting, diarrhoea, heartburn, stomach pains which do not improve
- loss of appetite
- any skin reactions where you have injected

Further resources

NDSS (National Diabetes Services Scheme)

Contact the NDSS on **1800 637 700** to order printed copies, or visit ndss.com.au/about-diabetes/resources

- [Non-insulin injectable](#)
- [Medications for type 2 diabetes](#)

Australian Diabetes Society

[Australian Diabetes Society Treatment Algorithm for Type 2 Diabetes](#)

Next steps

- Nutrition and eating well
- Monitoring blood glucose levels
- Hyperglycaemia & sick day management

Need help?
Phone 6215 9000
or visit diabetestas.org.au