



Diabetes Medications

Using a research-based approach, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield chooses safe, effective diabetes medications for the drug list/formulary.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that keeps the pancreas from making enough insulin. This causes sugar to stay in the blood instead of moving to cells and being used for energy. Cells may also become resistant to insulin. Unstable blood sugar levels can cause serious health problems over time – including blindness, kidney damage, amputation, heart disease and stroke.

Many people need more than one medication to control their blood sugar levels. That's why it's important to have a wide variety of medications available.

What does research say about diabetes medications?

All diabetes medications are proven to lower blood sugar levels. Doctors choose diabetes medications based on blood sugar levels, medication side effects, preferences and individual characteristics. More than one medication is often necessary for treatment.

Who decides which diabetes medications are covered?

Our Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee includes a large group of doctors and pharmacists who are not employees of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. This group and other professionals are responsible for the decisions surrounding our drug list/formulary – or list of covered medications. The P&T Committee reviews drugs for their safety, effectiveness and value. Diabetes medications on the drug list/formulary are selected as a result of these findings.

Where can I get more information?

The following websites offer valuable information about diabetes.

American Diabetes Association (ADA)
diabetes.org

Stay current on the latest diabetes news, research and drug treatments. Plus, get tips on lifestyle changes and recipes.

Effective Health Care Program
effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov

This website is from the United States Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a government research agency. It compares drugs and treatments. This site also offers two comprehensive consumer guides on diabetes medications.



Choosing Diabetes Medications

Here's a step-by-step look at how the P&T Committee agreed on diabetes medications for the drug list/formulary. Our approach is unique because we put clinical review first. Drug list/formulary decisions are based first on quality data, instead of cost.

Step 1: Clinical Review and Rating

First, the P&T Committee compared all diabetes medications by studying information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and medical research. They also used a detailed report prepared by pharmacists about the medical research studies and how well each study was done. Then, based on the research, the committee rated how well each drug works.

Step 2: Use and Cost Review

Next, the P&T Committee used Step 1 to determine which drugs are prescribed most often. After that, cost was considered.

Step 3: Set Coverage Level

Finally, the P&T Committee discussed this information, decided which medications should be included on the drug list/formulary and set coverage levels. Based on this review, the P&T Committee decided that:

- Anthem's drug list/formulary should contain a wide variety of generic and brand-name products. This gives members a number of options to meet their blood sugar goals and prevent long-term diabetes complications.
- Offering a wide selection of drugs at lower and moderate cost levels helps keep drug benefits affordable.
- The broad drug list/formulary supports the P&T Committee's decision that treatment should be highly individualized — a combination of drugs is often needed.

Covered Diabetes Medications

Oral Medications	Lower Cost (generics)	Moderate Cost	Higher Cost
Alpha-glucosidase Inhibitors: slow rising blood sugar after eating	• acarbose (generic Precose)	• Glyset (miglitol)	• Precose (acarbose)
Biguanides: help insulin move sugar from the blood stream into cells and lower the amount of sugar released by the liver	• metformin (generic Glucophage/ Glucophage XR)		• Fortamet, Glumetza, Riomet solution, Glucophage/Glucophage XR (all metformin)
DDP-IV Inhibitors: increase insulin released from the pancreas and decrease sugar made by the liver		• Januvia (sitagliptin) • Onglyza (saxagliptin)	
Meglitinides: signal the pancreas to release more insulin in response to sugar levels		• Prandin (repaglinide) • Starlix (nateglinide)	
Sulfonylureas: signal the pancreas to release more insulin	• glimepiride (generic Amaryl) • glipizide (generic Glucotrol/ Glucotrol XL) • glyburide (generic DiaBeta, Glynase, Micronase)		• Amaryl (glimepiride) • Glucotrol/Glucotrol XL (glipizide) • DiaBeta, Glynase, Micronase (all glyburide)
Thiazolidinediones (TZDs): help muscle and fat cells respond better to insulin and lower the amount of sugar released by the liver		• Actos (pioglitazone) • Avandia (rosiglitazone)	

Covered Diabetes Medications

Combination Products	Lower Cost (generics)	Moderate Cost	Higher Cost
Combine more than one drug in a single pill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glipizide/metformin (generic Metaglip) • glyburide/metformin (generic Glucovance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActoPlus Met (pioglitazone/metformin) • ActoPlus Met XR (pioglitazone/metformin extended release) • Avandamet (rosiglitazone/metformin) • Avandaryl (rosiglitazone/glimepiride) • Duetact (pioglitazone/glimepiride) • Janumet (sitagliptin/metformin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glucovance (glyburide/metformin) • Metaglip (glipizide/metformin) • Prandimet (repaglinide/metformin)

Injectable Medications	Lower Cost (generics)	Moderate Cost	Higher Cost
Replace the body's natural insulin		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulins (Humalog, Humulin, Lantus, Levemir, Novolin, Novolog) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulins (Apidra)

Other Injectable Medications	Lower Cost (generics)	Moderate Cost	Higher Cost
Act as natural hormones in the body to slow food absorption, reduce appetite and help cells use sugar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byetta (exenatide) • Symlin (pramlintide) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoza (liraglutide)

Please refer to your prescription drug benefit description of coverage, limitations and exclusions.

