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## AVOIDING MEDICATION MISTAKES

Medication mistakes can include taking a particular drug even though you have a contraindication (medical reason not to take it) and failing to take a drug even though your blood glucose, blood pressure, or blood cholesterol levels suggest you could benefit from taking it. Here are some things to consider regarding drugs used to control diabetes.

IF YOU HAVE THIS SITUATION	CONSIDER THIS OPTION	WHY
Congestive heart failure	Replace metformin (brand name Glucophage) with another drug.	If you have heart failure, metformin can build up in the blood and cause lactic acidosis, a very rare but serious condition. Best choice is insulin.
Congestive heart failure	Replace rosiglitazone (Avandia) or pioglitazone (Actos) with another drug.	These drugs may aggravate or worsen congestive heart failure. Best choice is insulin.
Kidney problems, including a serum creatinine level over 1.4 mg/dl in men or 1.3 mg/dl in women	Replace metformin (Glucophage) with another drug.	Metformin can build up in the blood and cause lactic acidosis, a very rare but serious condition. As kidney problems progress, the best choice is insulin.
Peripheral edema (swollen legs)	Talk to your doctor about causes and treatments.	Both pioglitazone (Actos) and rosiglitazone (Avandia) can cause peripheral edema.
Glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA <sub>1c</sub> ) level above 6.9%	Talk to your doctor about increasing your blood-glucose-lowering medicines.	Maintaining an HbA <sub>1c</sub> level below 7% reduces risk of blindness, kidney failure, and foot amputations.
Blood pressure above 129/79 mm Hg	Start taking a blood-pressure-lowering drug, or increase the dose(s) of those you are already taking. Certain drug classes called ACE inhibitors, ARB's, and diuretics may be particularly advantageous.	Maintaining a blood pressure level below 130/80 mm Hg is a very effective way to prevent strokes, blindness, kidney failure, heart failure, and heart attacks.
LDL ("bad") cholesterol above 99 mg/dl (or above 69 mg/dl if you have heart disease)	Start taking (or increase your dose of) a drug to lower your cholesterol to the recommended goal. Good choices may include generic simvastatin (Zocor), or atorvastatin (Lipitor).	Maintaining an LDL cholesterol level below 100 mg/dl (or below 70 mg/dl if you have heart disease) typically reduces your risk of heart attack by about 35%.

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*Diabetes Self-Management*, "How to Avoid Errors in Diabetes Care" by Patrick J. O'Connor, MD, MPH, JoAnn M. Sperl-Hillen, MD, and Becky Klein, RN, CDE

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