

4. Never self-adjust the OHA dose

- It is dangerous to self-adjust the OHA dose even when you
 - > experience side effects (e.g. headache, stomachache, weight gain)
 - > have missed one dose
 - > feel sick (e.g. cold, flu, fever)
 - > notice unsatisfactory blood or urine glucose readings with self-monitoring .
- ✓ Get professional advice if you are feeling unwell with the OHA treatment.
- ✋ Never take extra amount of OHA even if you have missed the previous dose.

5. NEVER take OHA with other drugs / complementary & alternative medicines (CAM) without first getting professional advice

- All OHA have the potential to interact with other drugs / herbs / health food / supplements.
- The actions, effects and safety of CAM may be unpredictable and may interact with OHA.
- ✓ Tell your doctor(s) what you are taking exactly to avoid potential drug interactions.

6. Take regular meals and do exercise

- Good diabetic control requires awareness of proper diet, regular exercise, glucose monitoring and good compliance of medication.
- Low blood glucose is most likely to occur after unaccustomed exercise, a skipped / delayed meal and starving.
- ✓ Ensure good drug compliance
- ✓ Take meals on a regular schedule and maintain adequate caloric intake.
- ✓ Maintain same physical activity levels on a regular basis.

7. Avoid alcohol and tobacco

- Ingestion of large amount of alcohol may cause low blood glucose.
- Cigarette smoking may reduce the efficacy of OHA and affect diabetic control.
- ✓ Refrain from alcohol and cigarette smoking.
- ✓ Seek professional advice for alcohol and smoking cessation regimens.

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The Seven Habits of Safe and Effective Use of Oral Hypoglycaemic Agents (OHAs) to Prevent Unintentional Poisoning



香港中毒防控網絡
Hong Kong Poison Control Network



What are Oral Hypoglycaemic Agents (OHA)?

- OHA helps lower the blood glucose level in your body.
- Some examples: Sulphonylureas (glibenclamide, gliclazide, glipizide, glimepiride); Meglitinides (nateglinide, repaglinide); Biguanides (metformin); Thiazolidinediones (pioglitazone, rosiglitazone)
- Some OHA are more prone to cause low blood glucose than others. Typical symptoms include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sweating, tremor, palpitations, shortness of breath, weakness and confusion.

1. Store OHA in a safe place

- OHA may pose great risks with severe outcome including death even with small doses in case of accidental ingestion.
 - A single adult therapeutic dose can kill a child!
- ✓ Keep OHA in a place out of reach of children.

2. Keep OHA in its original container

- Some OHA may look like other medications in colour and shape. Putting the OHA in a wrong container and following the wrong instructions as labelled may be dangerous to your health.
- ✓ Keep medication in its original container with clearly labelled instructions.
- ✓ An accurately pre-organized pill box is an acceptable alternative to store your medications.
- ✓ Do not mix different medications or old stocks with new stocks in the same container.

3. Never share OHA with others

- The underlying causes of non-insulin-dependent diabetes may be different in different patients.
 - Some patients need to take Sulphonylureas to increase insulin secretion in their body while others may need to take Biguanides to help their body utilize the glucose.
- ✓ Store your own medications separately from other family members' medications to prevent unintentional mix-up.
- 👉 Never recommend OHA to or share OHA with family members or friends.

