

SGLT-2 inhibitors (dapagliflozin, canagliflozin or empagliflozin)

What it does:

- SGLT-2 inhibitors help to slow down the progression of kidney disease.
- They also help to reduce the risk of heart disease, hospitalization for heart failure and death.

How it works:

SGLT-2 inhibitors prevent the kidney from reabsorbing sodium and sugar and leave them to be eliminated in the urine. This lowers sodium and sugar levels in the body and helps to:

- decrease the protein you pass in your urine
- decrease your blood pressure
- perhaps decrease your blood sugar
- decrease your body weight
- decrease uric acid in the blood

How to take it:

- Take it once a day, or as directed by your health care provider.
- The medication can be taken with or without food.
- Make sure to drink water each day so you do not become dehydrated.
- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is close to the time of your next dose, skip it and go back to your normal schedule. Do not “double-up” the dose as this may increase side effects.
- If you get sick with nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea (dehydrated), stop taking this medication until you feel better.

What side effects I should expect:

Most people won't have side effects while taking SGLT2 inhibitors. Some people may have mild side effects. Some possible side effects to be aware of:

- Urinating (peeing) more often or in larger amounts, an urgent need to urinate, an increase in urination at night, and feeling thirstier. Make sure that you keep up with good water intake.
- Lowered blood pressure, which can make you feel dizzy or lightheaded when you are standing.
- Genital yeast infections may occur. For women, symptoms of vaginal yeast infection include vaginal odour, white/yellowish discharge, and/or itchiness. For men, symptoms include rash or redness of the penis/foreskin and foul smelling discharge.
- Urinary tract infections may also occur. Symptoms include a burning feeling when urinating, frequent urination, cloudy urine, strong urine odour, bloody urine, and pelvic pain.
- A small decrease in kidney function may occur when starting the medication or increasing the dose. This is an expected side effect. Your doctor will monitor your kidney function closely.
- In diabetic patients, rare cases of acid build-up in the blood have been reported. This is called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). Please stop taking the medication immediately and seek out medical care if you experience nausea, vomiting, low appetite, abdominal pain, extreme thirst, difficulty breathing, confusion, and/or unusual fatigue or sleepiness.