

# What I need to know about my new medication

## Why should I read this leaflet?

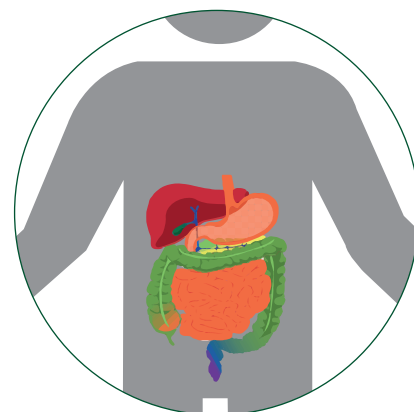
- You and your healthcare team have agreed that you should take a medication for your type 2 diabetes that belongs to a group of medicines called glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RA).
- This leaflet summarises what you need to know, but if you have any other questions, please ask your healthcare team or call the Diabetes UK helpline on 0345 123 2399.

## Background

- When we eat sugars and carbohydrates our body breaks these down to release glucose.
- If we have too much glucose in our blood this is known as diabetes and can lead to dangerous complications such as heart attacks, strokes and problems with our feet, kidneys and eyes.
- Our bodies need insulin so that cells in our body can take up the glucose from our blood and use it for energy.
- When someone has type 2 diabetes it is because the body produces less insulin or does not use it very well.
- Being overweight increases the risk of our bodies not using the insulin we produce very well.

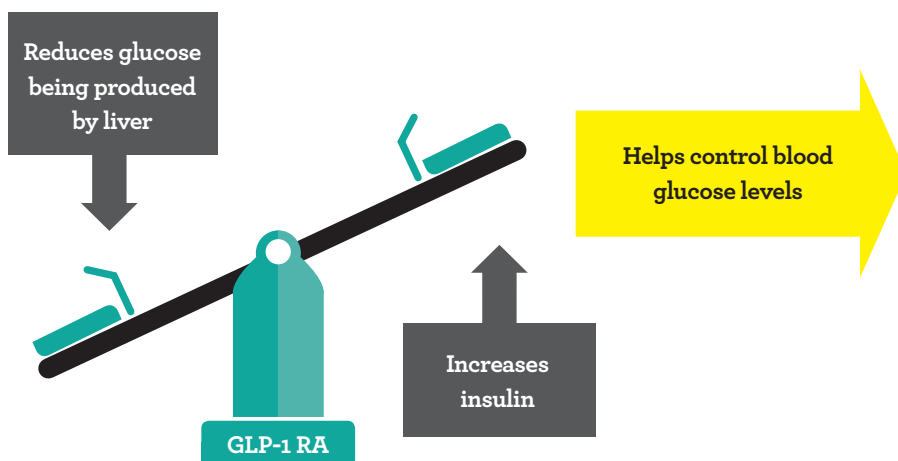
## What is a GLP-1 RA?

- A GLP-1 RA is a type of medication that works by increasing the levels of hormones called 'incretins' in your body. These hormones are in your gut.
- Incretin hormones help your body produce more insulin when it's needed (normally after eating) and reduce the amount of glucose being produced by your liver when it is not needed.
- They also reduce the rate at which the stomach digests food and empties, and can reduce appetite and make you feel fuller which can promote weight loss.
- In people with type 2 diabetes the effect of the incretin hormones can be half that of someone without diabetes
- Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) is one



of the incretin hormones, but you cannot take it as a medicine as your body would quickly destroy it. Instead there are medicines called GLP-1 RAs which work like GLP-1 but last much longer.

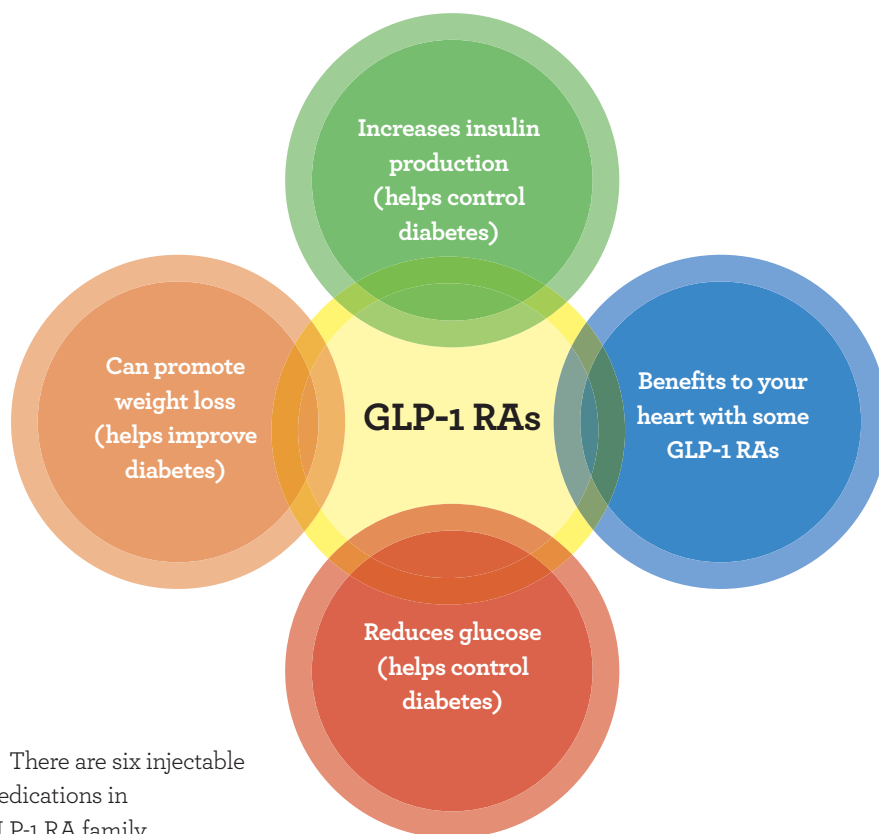
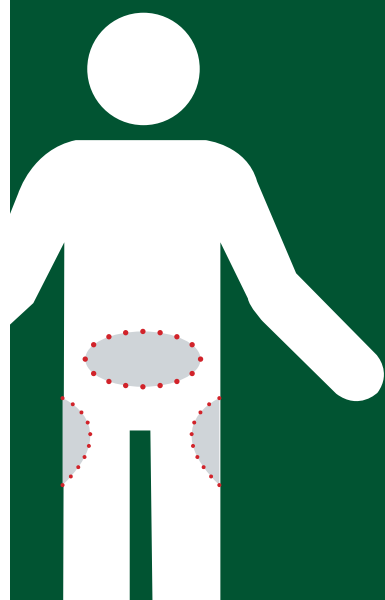
- Some GLP-1 RAs have been shown to provide benefit to your heart if you have already had a stroke, heart attack or have heart failure.



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### Injectable GLP-1 RAs

- Most GLP-1 RAs are taken as injections.
- Modern devices (called pens) mean that giving an injection is now much easier than you might think.
- Your healthcare team will show you the different pen devices and how to use them. This will help you in choosing which GLP-1 RA you want to take.
- You inject your GLP-1 RA into your stomach or thigh. Your healthcare team will show you how and give you advice on how to continue doing this well. It is important to change the area in which you give your injection each time you inject.
- Your healthcare team will also discuss with you how to store your injections to include taking on holiday with you and how to dispose of your pen devices once used.



- There are six injectable medications in GLP-1 RA family.

Injectable GLP-1RAs	OTHER NAME	FREQUENCY OF INJECTION
Exenatide	Byetta	Twice a day
Liraglutide	Victoza	Once a day
Lixisenatide	Lyxumia	Once a day
Exenatide prolonged release	Bydureon	Once a week
Dulaglutide	Trulicity	Once a week
Semaglutide	Ozempic	Once a week

ORAL GLP-1RA	OTHER NAME	FREQUENCY OF TABLET
Semaglutide	Rybelsus	Once daily

### What things should I think about when choosing a GLP-1RA?

#### How well will a GLP-1 RA work?

Discuss with your healthcare team how GLP-1 RAs work and which might be the most effective for you.

#### Are there any reasons why I shouldn't use a GLP-1 RA?

You should not take any GLP-1RA if:

- You have a history of pancreatitis
- You are planning to have a baby/are pregnant

- You are under 18 years old.

Your healthcare team may also need to review if there is any damage to your eyes from diabetes (retinopathy), how well your liver and kidneys are working, and if you have any pre-existing/history of problems with your stomach/digestive system when helping you choose a GLP-1 RA therapy.

#### Are GLP-1 RAs safe?

Most people do not experience any serious side effects while taking GLP-1 RAs. However, all drugs can have side effects. So, if you are worried or feel unwell, speak to your healthcare team.

