



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

SGLT2 Inhibitors in Diabetes

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Diabetes Centre

① For more information, please contact:

York Hospital

Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Telephone 01904 726510

or

Scarborough Hospital

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

Telephone 01723 342274

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Introduction

You have been prescribed a medication to treat diabetes which is from a group of medications called Sodium Glucose co-Transporter-2 Inhibitors or SGLT2 Inhibitors.

Your medication will be one of the following:

- Dapagliflozin (Forxiga)
- Empagliflozin (Jardiance)
- Canagliflozin (Invokana)
- Ertugliflozin (Steglatro)

This leaflet is to help support you in using your medication safely. Please keep it in a safe place.

Family, friends and carers can play an important role in managing your medication. Please share this information with them.

What is an SGLT2 Inhibitor?

These drugs work by helping the kidneys to pass excess sugar out of the body in urine. This can help to lower glucose (sugar) levels in your blood. If your urine is tested with a dipstick, it would show that glucose is present, which is normal.

These medications can also be used to treat a condition called Heart Failure (HF), which is sometimes called Congestive Cardiac Failure (CCF). If you are using an SGLT2 Inhibitor for this, your Cardiology doctor or Heart Failure Specialist Nurse will have discussed this with you.

This medication is taken once daily but the dose prescribed will be different depending on the patient and which medication is prescribed.

How to take this medication

You should take this tablet in the morning and at the same time each day. Swallow the tablet whole with some water, preferably before the first meal of the day.

If you miss a dose, you should take it as soon as you remember; however, never take a double dose on the same day.

Potential side effects

Very common (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)

- Thrush (more common in females)
- Low blood sugar

Common (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)

- Urine infection
- Dizziness
- Increased urination
- Dehydration
- Thirst
- Low blood pressure

Rare (may affect up to 1 in 1000 people)

- Diabetes Ketoacidosis (DKA)

This is a serious and potentially life threatening complication, see page 6 for additional information.

Rare (Unknown frequency)

- Fournier's Gangrene

Seek urgent medical attention if you experience a combination of pain, tenderness, swelling or redness of the genitals or perineal area.

Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)

This side effect is rare, affecting up to one in 1,000 people who take SGLT2 inhibitors. However, it is serious and potentially life threatening.

Signs and symptoms of Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)

You, your family, friends and carers should know these signs so you can take immediate action.

- Feeling or being sick
- Feeling drowsy
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Fast and deep breathing
- Sweet smelling breath (like pear drops or acetone)

If you experience any of these, you must seek immediate medical attention.

What to do if you are unwell

There is a higher risk of Diabetic Ketoacidosis when you are unwell.

Therefore, it is very important that you follow the **Sick Day Rules**. If you become unwell, for example, with an infection, diarrhoea and vomiting, flu, severe cold, pneumonia, COVID-19 or are not eating and drinking normally you should take the following steps in line with Sick Day Rules:

- You should temporarily stop taking your SGLT2 inhibitor until you are feeling better
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration

People who should not take these medications

- Women who are pregnant or breast feeding
- Anyone who has previously had Diabetic Ketoacidosis
- If you have Type 1 Diabetes, unless advised to do so by a Consultant Endocrinologist or Diabetes Specialist Nurse

Where to report side effects

If you experience side effects to your medication, you can report these directly to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency via the website www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard, via the free apps ('Yellow Card Scheme' in the Google Play Store or 'Yellow Card – MHRA' in the Apple App Store), or by calling the free phoneline (0800 731 6789).

Scan the QR code to view an online copy of this leaflet:



Where can I get more information?

If you are still unsure or have any further questions about your medication you can speak to your doctor, pharmacist or local diabetes service.

Diabetes Centre York
Tel. 01904 726510

Diabetes Centre Scarborough
Tel. 01723 342274

York Hospital Pharmacy
Tel. 01904 725736

Scarborough Hospital Pharmacy
Tel. 01723 342448

Or alternatively go online for more information at:

Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk

NHS website: www.nhs.uk

Department of Health: www.dh.gov.uk

[Websites Accessed May 2026]

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Diabetes Centre York, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or 01904 726510.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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