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2. Actos

# Actos

**Pronunciation:** *ak-TŌS*

**Generic name:** [pioglitazone](#) (oral)

**Drug class:** [Thiazolidinediones](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Dec 4, 2024.

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## What is Actos?

Actos is an oral [diabetes medicine](#) that helps control blood sugar levels.

Actos is used together with diet and exercise to improve blood sugar control in adults with [type 2 diabetes mellitus](#).

Actos is not for treating [type 1 diabetes](#).

## Warnings

You should not use Actos if you have severe or uncontrolled heart failure, active bladder cancer, or diabetic ketoacidosis (call your doctor for treatment with insulin). This medicine is not for treating type 1 diabetes.

Actos can cause or worsen congestive heart failure. Stop using this medicine and call your doctor at once if you have shortness of breath (even with mild exertion), swelling, or rapid weight gain.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use Actos if you are allergic to pioglitazone, or if you have:

- severe or uncontrolled heart failure; or
- [diabetic ketoacidosis](#) (call your doctor for treatment).

This medication may increase your risk of developing bladder cancer. Talk with your doctor about your specific risk.

To make sure Actos is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- congestive heart failure or heart disease;
- a [heart attack](#) or stroke;
- eye problems caused by diabetes;

- bladder cancer; or
- liver disease.

Actos may increase your risk of serious heart problems, but not treating your diabetes can also damage your heart and other organs. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of this medicine.

Follow your doctor's instructions about using Actos **if you are pregnant or you become pregnant**. Controlling diabetes is very important during pregnancy, and having high blood sugar may cause complications in both the mother and the baby.

Pioglitazone may stimulate ovulation in a premenopausal woman and may increase the risk of unintended pregnancy. Talk to your doctor about your risk.

Women may be more likely to have a broken bone while using Actos. Talk with your doctor about ways to keep your bones healthy.

It may not be safe to breastfeed while using this medicine. Ask your doctor about any risk.

Actos is not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

 [Actos pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

## How should I take Actos?

Take Actos exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

Actos is usually taken once daily, with or without food.

You may have low blood sugar (**hypoglycemia**) and feel very hungry, dizzy, irritable, confused, anxious, or shaky. To quickly treat hypoglycemia, eat or drink a fast-acting source of sugar (fruit juice, hard candy, crackers, raisins, or non-diet soda).

Your doctor may prescribe a glucagon injection kit in case you have severe hypoglycemia. Be sure your family or close friends know how to give you this injection in an emergency.

Blood sugar levels can be affected by [stress](#), illness, surgery, exercise, alcohol use, or skipping meals. **Ask your doctor before changing your dose or medication schedule.**

Actos is only part of a treatment program that may also include diet, exercise, weight control, blood sugar testing, and special medical care. Follow your doctor's instructions very closely.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

## Dosing information

### Usual Adult Dose for Diabetes Type 2:

-Patients without congestive heart failure:

Initial dose: 15 mg or 30 mg orally once a day

-Patients with congestive heart failure (New York Heart Association [NYHA] Class I or II):

Initial dose: 15 mg orally once a day

Maintenance dose: 15 mg to 45 mg orally once a day based on glycemic response as determined by HbA1c

Maximum dose: 45 mg orally once a day

Comments:

-This drug exerts its antihyperglycemic effect only in the presence of endogenous [insulin](#) and therefore is not expected to be effective in patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus or diabetic ketoacidosis.

-Patients concomitantly receiving an [insulin](#) secretagogue or [insulin](#) may need to reduce the dose of the insulin secretagogue or insulin if hypoglycemia occurs.

Use: As an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in adults with [type 2 diabetes](#) mellitus in multiple clinical settings

 [Detailed Actos dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. You may have signs of low blood sugar, such as extreme weakness, blurred vision, sweating, trouble speaking, tremors, stomach pain, confusion, and seizure (convulsions).

## What to avoid

Avoid drinking alcohol. It lowers blood sugar and may interfere with your diabetes treatment.

## Actos side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Actos**: [hives](#); difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Stop using Actos and call your doctor at once if you have **symptoms of liver damage**: nausea, upper stomach pain, itching, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, or [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- shortness of breath (especially when lying down), unusual tiredness, swelling, rapid weight gain;
- pink or red urine, painful or difficult urination, new or worsening urge to urinate;
- changes in your vision; or
- sudden unusual pain in your hand, arm, or foot.

Some people taking this medicine have had bladder cancer, but it is not clear if pioglitazone was the actual cause.

Common Actos side effects may include:

- headache;
- muscle pain; or
- [cold symptoms](#) such as stuffy nose, sinus pain, sneezing, [sore throat](#).

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Actos side effects](#) (more detail)

## Related/similar drugs

### Ozempic

Learn about Ozempic (semaglutide) for type 2 diabetes treatment, weight management, cardiovascular ...

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6.6 / 10

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### Rybelsus

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Mounjaro (tirzepatide) is FDA-approved to manage type 2 diabetes in adults. It lowers blood sugar ...

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## Trulicity

Trulicity is an injectable diabetes medicine that is used together with diet and exercise to ...

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## Lantus

Lantus is a long acting form of insulin used to treat type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Learn about side ...

### Reviews & ratings

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## Tresiba

Tresiba (insulin degludec) is used to treat diabetes mellitus. Includes Tresiba side effects ...

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## Victoza

Victoza helps control blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of serious heart problems in people ...

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## Basaglar

Basaglar (insulin glargine) is a long-acting insulin that is used to improve

acting insulin that is used to improve blood sugar control in ...

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### Levemir

Levemir (insulin detemir) is a long acting insulin used to treat diabetes in adults and children ...

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### Novolog

NovoLog is a fast-acting insulin used to treat diabetes to control blood sugar levels in adults and ...

#### Reviews & ratings

5.5 / 10

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## What other drugs will affect Actos?

Tell your doctor if you use [insulin](#). Taking Actos while you are using insulin may increase your risk of serious heart problems.

Many drugs can interact with pioglitazone. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed here. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Actos drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does Actos interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Actos

+

Enter a drug name

Add

## More about Actos (pioglitazone)

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- [Breastfeeding](#)
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## Professional resources

- [Actos prescribing information](#)
- [Pioglitazone \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Type 2 Diabetes](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Actos only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)


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**DRUG STATUS**

### Availability

**Rx** Prescription only

### Pregnancy & Lactation

 Risk data available

### CSA Schedule\*

**N/A** Not a controlled drug

### Approval History

**10+ years** FDA approved 1999



## User Reviews & Ratings

4.8 / 10

[40 Reviews](#)

## Images

[Actos 15 mg \(ACTOS 15\)](#)



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