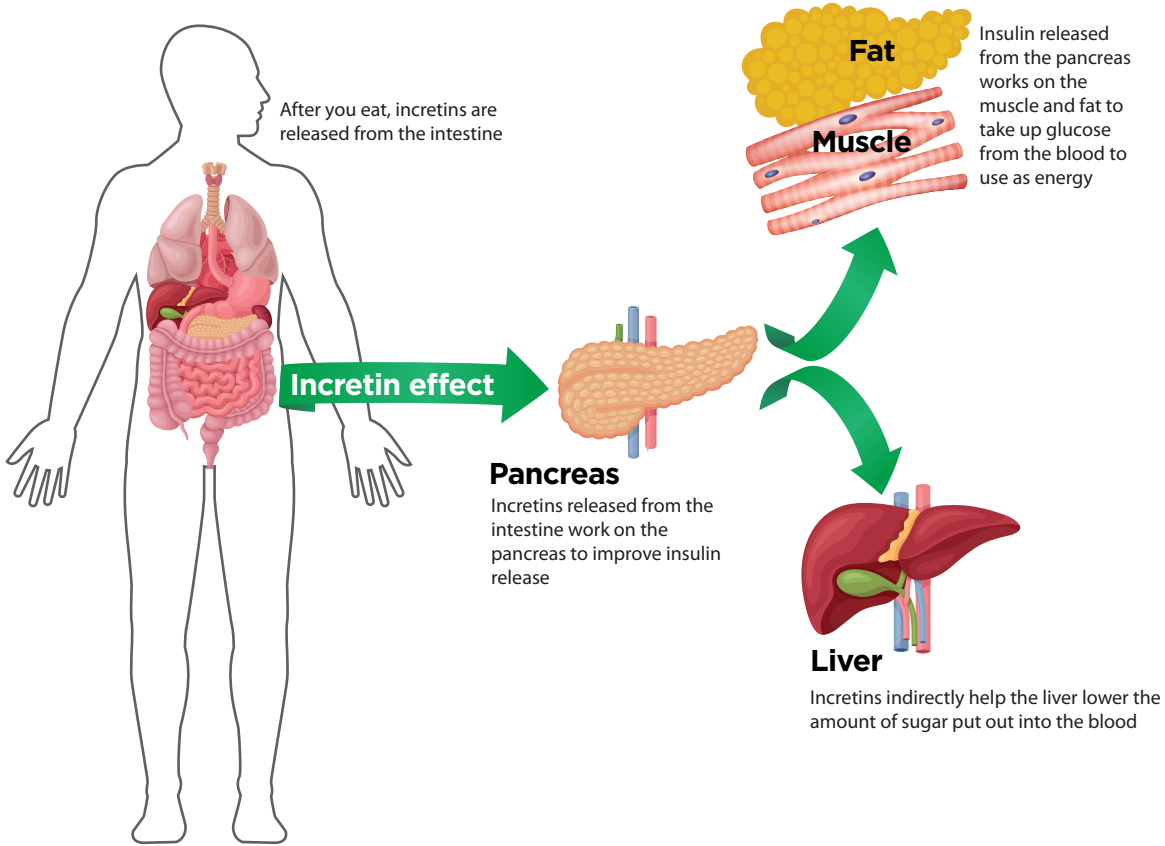


Understanding Side Effects for Incretin-Based Therapies

If you have type 2 diabetes, there are treatment options. It may help you to know that **your diabetes care team can help you with these treatment options.** An incretin-based therapy may be one of those treatment options. This material will help you understand how this type of medication works in your body, what some possible side effects are, and what you can do to manage them.

Get Familiar with Incretins:

The figure below illustrates how incretins work in the body to help the body respond to the food you eat.



Incretins are naturally found in the body, but they may not work as well in people with Type 2 diabetes. They are released from cells in the gut when we eat food. Incretins are not insulin, but instead signal the pancreas to put out insulin. Insulin is released into the blood stream and tells the surrounding cells to take up sugar from the blood to use as energy. Insulin is like a key that opens the door to the cell to let the sugar in to be used for energy.



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Understand How Incretin-Based Therapies Can Help:

Incretin-based therapies have been used to treat type 2 diabetes for 17 years. They not only help lower blood sugar, they:

- Have a low risk of low blood sugar when they're used on their own
- Help you avoid gaining more weight, or even lose some
- Can help lower risks of conditions related to blood vessel problems, such as heart attacks and strokes

Put the most common side effects in perspective:

Like with any medication, there can be side effects. For some people taking incretin-based therapies, these can include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

These side effects happen more commonly when first starting the medication and usually mild to moderate in severity. If these side effects do happen, they usually get better over time.

Number of people who reported either nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea out of those people who took an incretin-based therapy, as shown by the people in the figures below in dark purple.

Reported Nausea



Reported Vomiting



Reported Diarrhea



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Practice These Tips for Managing Side Effects:

A diabetes care and education specialist, primary care physician, nurse practitioner, dietitian, pharmacist or endocrinologist among others may be a part of a diabetes care team. They can share with you these tips on how to reduce these side effects. They will start your medication at a low dose and adjust if needed.

- Eat smaller meals broken up throughout the day
- Avoid high fat food
- Start your medication on a day you're going to be home
- Eat slowly so you can listen when your body starts to feel full, this is your signal to stop eating



Know the Steps for Staying Safe and What to Report to Your Care Team:

Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea can cause dehydration and is especially a concern if you have kidney problems. It is important that you keep up with your fluid intake if you experience nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

Please let your clinician and diabetes care team know if you keep vomiting and cannot keep down fluids.