

# **SGLT2 Inhibitor Medications**

# **Why have I been given this information?**

You have been sent this information because you are taking or are about to take an SGLT-2 inhibitor drug to improve the treatment of your diabetes, kidney, or heart disease.

The name of these drugs end with ‘gliflozin’. Examples include:

* empagliflozin (Jardiance®)
* dapagliflozin (Forxiga®)
* canagliflozin (lnvokana®)
* ertugliflozin (Steglatro®)

Research has found that there are some very rare but important side effects which appear to be associated with taking this medication. It is important to note that these side effects are very rare and do not outweigh the benefits to using this medication. You should be aware of these potential side effects as if they are not identified early, they can be extremely dangerous.

## **What are these side effects?**

The first is called **diabetic ketoacidosis,** a condition in which there is too much acid in the blood, as a result of changes in blood sugar. This can very rarely happen in some people with type 2 diabetes and these drugs can increase this risk even when the blood glucose concentration is normal.

The second is called **Fournier’s gangrene.** This is a very rare and severe spreading skin infection in the genital or groin area which leads to abscesses and skin destruction. If treatment is delayed it can be fatal.

**How common are these side effects?**

**Diabetic ketoacidosis** is estimated to occur in between 1 in 1000 and 1 in 10,000 patients treated with an SGLT-2 inhibitor.

**Fournier’s gangrene** can occur in people who do not have diabetes but is more common in people with diabetes. It is estimated to occur in approximately 1 in 100,000 patients treated with an SGLT-2 inhibitor. This appears to be approximately 12 times more common than in patients treated with other diabetes drugs. Most cases of Fournier’s gangrene occur in men, but in patients treated with SGLT2 inhibitors it can also occur in women

**What should I look out for?**

The following symptoms might indicate **diabetic ketoacidosis**: nausea, vomiting, fast breathing, abdominal pains, unusual drowsiness, or fever.

The following symptoms might indicate **Fournier’s gangrene**: severe pain, tenderness, redness, or swelling in the genital or groin area accompanied by fever or generally feeling unwell.

If you have any of these symptoms, please seek help immediately, even if your blood sugars are near normal.

If we are closed, please dial 111 or 999 if you are severely unwell. Tell them that you are worried about one of the conditions above. Stop this medication until you have further medical advice.

**What if I am having major surgery?**

Please stop this medication 24 hours before your surgery. Speak to your hospital team during your pre-operative assessment. Restart only after you are fully mobile and eating and drinking normally.

**Is there anything more likely to cause diabetic ketoacidosis?**

* Any conditions leading to restricted food intake or severe dehydration.
* You need to be especially careful if you develop an infection (like a chest or urine infection) or undergo surgery
* If you are planning to have a minor operation, or any other procedure which involves fasting overnight, we suggest you stop your SGLT-2 tablets on the day of the procedure
* Alcohol abuse