

Can people with diabetes use over-the-counter products?

Over-the-counter products include medicines, vitamins, supplements, creams, and lotions. You can buy them without a prescription from your provider.

Over-the-counter products may affect you differently because of your diabetes, so it is important to choose carefully. Your provider and pharmacist can help you choose over-the-counter products.

Before you buy an over-the-counter product, be sure to tell your provider or pharmacist if you:

- Have allergies.
- Are taking any other medicines or drugs.
- Have any diseases or conditions, like diabetes.
- Use alcohol or tobacco.

Choosing an over-the-counter product

Ask your pharmacist to help you choose over-the-counter products. It is important to read the label on all products such as

Effects of over the counter products

Some ingredients in over-the-counter products may raise your blood sugar or have other effects. Always talk to your provider or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter product.

Look out for the following ingredients that could raise your blood sugar levels:

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| Sugar | Many over-the-counter products are made with sugar. Sugar can raise your blood sugar. Be sure to ask the pharmacist about sugar-free products. |
| Aspirin | Talk to your provider about aspirin. |
| Alcohol | People on diabetes medicine can be more affected by alcohol. |
| Caffeine | Caffeine can raise your blood sugar. Limit your caffeine intake. |
| Cold Medicines | Some cold medicines may raise blood sugar. Your provider or pharmacist can help you decide which products are right for you. |
| Tobacco | Tobacco use can raise your blood sugar. Tobacco use also puts you at risk for other diseases. |

medicines, creams, lotions, vitamins, and supplements.

- Read the label. Know what is in the product.
- Look for warnings. Talk to your provider before taking a medicine if it says something like, “Individuals with high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes should use only as directed by a physician.”
- Do not use products that warn, “Not to be used by people with diabetes.”

- Choose low sugar or sugar-free medicines.
- Choose medicines with little or no alcohol.
- Pills usually do not have sugar or alcohol.
- Be sure your provider knows which over-the-counter products you use.
- Use the same pharmacy. That way they will have a record of all your medicines.

Using over-the-counter products

- Check your blood sugar often to see if there is a change.
- Know about possible side effects.
- Read the label. Follow the directions.
- Know the doses and when you should take them.
- Talk to your provider and pharmacist.

Remember, just because you do not need a prescription to buy the product does not mean that it is safe. Always choose your over-the-counter products carefully. Read labels and ask questions. Your provider and pharmacist will help you make the right choices.

