

## BYETTA – a new class of drugs is changing the face of Diabetes

### EMMC is Reporting on Byetta for Type 2 Users and Setting Expectations

Due to the complex effects of this drug on metabolism, we will report on type 1 diabetic users separately.

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#### Byetta Snippets

- Benefits include weight loss and improved blood sugar control.
- Fresh ginger helps with the nausea (place it on palate).
- A few sips of flat coke may also help with nausea.
- Many of you have been relieved to find that the injection is so small it is hardly visible.
- Other versions of Byetta are currently being tested, including one to be used *only* once a week (compared to the current twice daily instruction).

#### An information Resource

[www.diabetes.blog.com](http://www.diabetes.blog.com)

#### Contact Us

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Learning about anything new is a process, so this is the first of many reports to come. The New York Times' cover story this past week read "A Ray of Hope for Diabetics" dated Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

#### Byetta on Weight

It is important that Byetta be refrigerated and injected twice daily. Most of you are demonstrating excellent compliance, which is providing us with consistent results. The majority of you are losing weight and report feeling full even after small meals. When weight loss is not indicated by the scale, many of you are still losing inches. Shedding pounds is welcome as it reduces risks associated with other diabetic complications (high blood pressure, blindness, neuropathy, kidney failure, etc.) Appetite suppression is due to Byetta's active ingredient, exenatide. It encourages diges-



tion and the production of insulin, which functions are compromised in type 2 individuals.

Some of you report hitting a weight loss plateau at around 3 months (timing may vary). At this time, it may be necessary to adjust your medication regimen. Improving diet and increasing exercise also help you resume the weight loss process.

Overweight patients without a diabetes diagnosis are also seeking Byetta as a weight loss option. Therefore, EMMC runs a variety of tests (CGMS, C-Peptide, & HBA1C) and to the patient's surprise, is finding that their level of insulin resistance warrants a "pre-diabetic" or diabetic diagnosis. A combination of tests is necessary to accurately assess an individual's level of insulin resistance. Results of one test alone may not give an accurate assessment of the compromised metabolism.

#### Byetta on Low Blood Sugars

Low blood sugar episodes (hypoglycemia) may be characterized by shakiness, trembling, nervousness, increase in heart rate, headache, dizziness, increase in hunger, coldness, inability to concentrate, inability to focus (eyesight), and unusual perspiring. Glucose tablets, Lifesavers, or 2-4 ounces of orange juice are remedies that are working well for patients. Fortunately, small numbers of you report these episodes. To date, Byetta is giving patients better blood sugar control (indicated by your CGMS values) and is still less likely to cause low blood sugar when compared to insulin.

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## Byetta on Nausea

Approximately 20% of you have reported nausea. For some, that nausea will subside either by the use of a home remedy like ginger or by an adjustment to your medication after an evaluation. For others, however, nausea is a side effect that will persist, making Byetta a poor choice for you.

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## Byetta on Overall Well-being

Many of you report having more energy and strength than you have had in years. This is a wonderful contrast to the feeling of tiredness that some of you report when taking insulin.

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## Expectations

### Month 1:

- Extensive testing for your safety
- Weight loss
- Low blood sugars may manifest
- Nausea may manifest
- A sense of improved overall well being
- C-Peptide test (for best results take test 1 hour after meal)
- Daily fasting glucose #s sent to EMMC (minimum of 4 daily readings)

### Month 3:

- Possible weight loss plateau for some and continued weight loss for others
- Improved blood sugar control
- Medication adjustments
- Beginning stages of regeneration of pancreatic Beta cells prompted by Byetta

### Month 4-8:

- Changes in beta cell mass measured by C-Peptide & A1C test
- Retesting of any tests done at month 1 which showed abnormal results
- Weight loss may subside
- Confirm whether Byetta is the best ongoing treatment for you