

DPP-4 inhibitors

As of today's date (2019-Feb-21) there are 3 members of the DPP-4 inhibitor class on the Canadian market.

sitagliptin (Januvia), usual maintenance dose 100 mg tab i daily (\$3/day)

saxagliptin (Onglyza), usual maintenance dose 5 mg tab i daily (\$2.50/day)

linagliptin (Trajenta), usual maintenance dose 5 mg tab i daily (\$2.50/day)

All three of the currently marketed DPP-4 inhibitors (hereafter "DPP-4s") lower blood sugar (glucose) levels effectively and safely. The mechanism of blood sugar lowering is complex : it includes improving the action of insulin & increasing the amount of insulin secreted. DPP-4s have no common side effects; importantly they do not cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) unless they are used in combination with insulin or drugs from the sulfonylurea class (glyburide, gliclazide, glimepiride, glipizide).

Sitagliptin and saxagliptin should be prescribed at half the usual maintenance dose in individuals with reduced kidney function (eGFR < 40).

In British Columbia, Canada only two of the three DPP-4s are covered by Pharmacare, the provincial health insurer. Coverage requires completion of a Special Authority - your doctor will help in obtaining it. Sitagliptin is not covered.