

and mild nausea are common side effects of phenformin, particularly upon initiation of therapy. Nausea, vomiting, malaise, or abdominal pain may herald the onset of lactic acidosis. The patient should be instructed to notify the physician immediately at the onset of any of these gastrointestinal symptoms or of hyperventilation. Phenformin should be withdrawn until the situation is clarified by determination of serum electrolytes and ketones, blood glucose, and, if indicated, blood pH, lactate, and pyruvate levels.

d. Lactic acidosis has a significant mortality and, when suspected, must be treated promptly by discontinuing phenformin and giving bicarbonate infusions and other appropriate therapy even before the results of lactate determinations are available. Lactic acidosis should be suspected in any diabetic patient with metabolic acidosis in the absence of ketonuria and ketonemia, uremia, and methanol or salicylate poisoning.