

What you need to know about medications for weight loss, diabetes type 2, and other conditions



## IN THE NEWS GLP-1 Agonists

From local news to social media to Hollywood, it seems everyone is talking about the new class of weight loss drugs known as **GLP-1 Agonists**. If you have questions, **we're here to help!** We encourage you to read these FAQs and talk to your provider for more information.

### What Are GLP-1 Agonists?

GLP-1 (Glucagon-like peptide-1) agonists, or dual agents like glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), and glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) are an **FDA approved class of prescription medications used in combination with diet and exercise to treat type-2 diabetes or chronic weight management**. Some GLP-1 agonists have also been shown to lower the chances of having a major cardiovascular event in people with established heart disease and who are obese or overweight.

### For Treatment Of Type-2 Diabetes:

- Dulaglutide (Trulicity®)
- Exenatide, Exenatide ER (Byetta®, Bydureon BCise®)
- Liraglutide (Victoza®)
- Semaglutide (Ozempic®, Rybelsus®)
- Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)\*

### For Chronic Weight Management:

- Liraglutide (Saxenda®)
- Semaglutide (Wegovy®)
- Tirzepatide (Zepbound®)\*

\*GLP-1/GIP agonist

### What Do They Do?

- **Regulate two important hormones:** Insulin and Glucagon.
- **Slow down digestion and decrease appetite**, so you feel fuller longer.

### How Are They Taken?

- Most of the GLP-1 agonists are **injected** under the skin either daily or weekly, except for Rybelsus® tablets which are taken once daily by mouth on an empty stomach 30-min prior to breakfast.
- The **dosing will vary** depending on the condition treated.

What are  
the **side**  
effects?



## What Are The Side Effects?

- **Common side effects** include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation, low blood glucose, and injection site reaction (redness, pain, swelling). Be sure to increase fiber intake, reduce portion sizes, and titrate the dose slowly as directed to minimize these side effects.
- **Rare, but serious side effects** include kidney damage (acute kidney injury), inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis), damage to structures in the back of your eye (retinopathy), and gall bladder disease. It is not known if GLP-1 agonists can worsen depression, suicidal thoughts, or cause unusual changes in mood or behavior.
- **Report any new or worsening side effects** to your provider when they occur.

## Who Should Not Take Them:

### Anyone Who Has Or Is:

- Personal or family history of **medullary thyroid cancer** or **endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2**
- Allergic to the medication or any of its ingredients
- Pancreatitis
- IBS/reflux
- Bariatric surgery
- Suicidal thoughts or actions
- Pregnant or breast feeding

**People over 65** should talk to their provider about the risks/benefits of starting a GLP-1 agonist. GLP-1 agonists tend to make you lose muscle, not just fat, so you should have a plan to increase

protein intake and weight resistance exercise to help prevent muscle loss. They can also decrease bone density, which increases your risk of breaking bones, so your provider may also monitor your bone mineral density closely.

**Talk to your provider about your other medications** (especially “-gliptan” medications) and ask for special instructions needed for illness or surgery.

## How Long Do I Need To Take Them?

- It is important to take your medication as prescribed to achieve the best possible health outcome.
- GLP-1 agonists are intended to be taken long-term over many years, and the benefits of A1C lowering and weight loss are generally reversed upon discontinuation. This means that most people who stop the medication gain back most of the weight they lost.
- Talk to your provider during and in between appointments about any concerns that you may have with your medications.

## We Are Here For You

