

Obesity Management Medication

Information for patients

NHS Lothian Weight Management Service

Contact us

If you have any questions just get in touch. If you have been prescribed these medicines by someone else please contact them directly.

Email: loth.weightmanagement@nhs.scot

Phone: 0131 537 9169 (Monday to Friday 9am-4pm or leave a message).

Website: <https://services.nhsllothian.scot/awmt2d/>



Types of medicines

Liraglutide (Saxenda®)	Semaglutide (Wegovy®)	Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)
		

How they work

After you eat, your body releases hormones in the gut that help control blood sugar, regulate appetite and make you feel full. These medicines work in the same way as these hormones but have a longer lasting effect in your body.

When combined with a healthy diet and lifestyle, these medicines can help to regulate blood sugar levels, slow down digestion and lower your appetite.

Some people eat less as they find they think about food less often.

What to expect

When combined with a healthy diet and lifestyle, these medicines may help you lose 10 -20% of your body weight over 2 years, but they may not work for everyone.

Time	What to expect
0 – 6 months	Weight loss - may be quick. Appetite - may reduce. Side effects – may be strong.
6 – 12 months	Weight loss - might slow down. Appetite - might increase slightly. Side effects - may get better.
12 months +	Weight loss - might slow down or stop. Appetite - might increase more. Side effects - may be minimal.
If you stop	If you stop taking these medicines, you may regain weight. You may be more likely to maintain weight loss by coming off the medicine gradually decreasing the dose. Talk to your prescriber.



It's important to build healthy sustainable diet and lifestyle habits whilst taking these medicines. This may help you maintain your weight loss if you stop taking the medicine.

However, it is likely that you will need to take these medicines long-term to maintain weight loss.

How much to take

These medicines are prescribed at the lowest dose and increased slowly. You may not need the maximum dose. If you have side effects talk to your prescriber. You may need to stop the medicine, reduce your dose or keep on your current dose for longer.

Please note: If you are on semaglutide or tirzepatide for Type 2 Diabetes, your dose will depend on your blood sugar. Your medicine may also have a different name to those below.

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)

Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-8	Weeks 9-12	Weeks 13-16	Weeks 17-20	Week 21+
2.5mg once a week	5mg once a week	7.5mg once a week	10mg once a week	12.5mg once a week	15mg once a week

Semaglutide (Wegovy®)

Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-8	Weeks 9-12	Weeks 13-16	Week 17+
0.25mg once a week	0.5mg once a week	1mg once a week	1.7mg once a week	2.4mg once a week

Liraglutide (Saxenda®)

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5+
0.6mg once a day	1.2mg once a day	1.8mg once a day	2.4mg once a day	3mg once a day

What to do if you miss a dose

If you miss a dose what you do depends on when you remember. You should either:

- Take the dose when you remember and carry on as normal
- Do NOT take a dose and wait until you would take your next dose.

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Take catch up dose	Take catch up dose	Take catch up dose	Take catch up dose	Skip dose and wait	Skip dose and wait	Skip dose and wait

Semaglutide (Wegovy®)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Take catch up dose	Skip dose and wait	Skip dose and wait				

Liraglutide (Saxenda®)

1-12hr	12-24hr
Take catch up dose	Skip dose and wait

How to take it

You can take the medicine at any time of the day, with or without food. Try to inject yourself at the same time of day, and on the same day of the week if you are taking Wegovy or Mounjaro.

Scan the QR codes using the camera on your phone or visit the links below for videos for guidance.

Liraglutide (Saxenda®)	Semaglutide (Wegovy®)	Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)
		

If you have a rash, itching, eczema, swelling or redness where you inject speak to your prescriber or GP. This could be an allergic reaction.

Video links

- **Liraglutide (Saxenda®):** www.novomedlink.com/obesity/products/treatments/saxenda/dosing-administration/using-the-saxenda-pen.html
- **Semaglutide (Wegovy®):** www.wegovy.com/obesity/starting-wegovy/starting-wegovy-pen.html
- **Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®):** <https://mounjaro.lilly.com/how-to-use-mounjaro>

Storage

- **Before you use them:** Keep them in the fridge in their original packaging. Do NOT freeze.
- **After you have used them:** Once the pen has been used, it can be stored in the fridge or at room temperature (not exceeding 30°C) for up to 30 days. When not in use, keep the pen cap on. Check the expiry date before use.

Disposal

- Put your empty pen in a sharps disposal container. Do NOT put them in the bin.
- If you do not have a sharps container, use a container that:
 - is heavy-duty plastic,
 - has a tight-fitting, puncture-resistant lid,
 - is upright and stable during use,
 - is leak-resistant,
 - has a label to warn of hazardous waste inside the container.
- When your sharps disposal container is almost full, follow your council guidelines to dispose of it. Do NOT recycle it. **Ask your prescriber if unsure.**

Who shouldn't take these medicines

Do NOT take these medicines if you:

- Have had pancreatitis of unclear cause
- Have gastroparesis
- Have severe gastrointestinal symptoms
- Have an eating disorder
- Are pregnant or trying for a baby. **Stop using the medicine at least 2 months before you start to try for a baby or if you are pregnant.** The medicine may affect the development of your baby.

Please speak to a registered prescriber or your doctor if you are unsure if these medicines are suitable for you, or if you:

- Have a kidney impairment
- Have a liver impairment
- Have gallbladder disease
- Are breast feeding
- Take certain oral medicines such as blood thinners, epilepsy, heart or thyroid medicines as they may be affected

Important Considerations

Vomiting, diarrhoea and fever

You may need to stop taking this medicine if you have severe vomiting, diarrhoea or a high fever as this may cause dehydration and kidney issues. You can restart it once you are eating and drinking normally again. **Speak to your prescriber.**

Contraception

The oral contraceptive pill may be less effective when on these medicines. You may need to consider other forms of contraception to avoid pregnancy. **Speak to a doctor or the sexual health clinic to discuss options.**

Surgery or procedures requiring general anaesthesia

These medicines slow down the emptying of your stomach, so there is a risk food will get into your lungs during surgery or other procedures. **Speak to your healthcare providers (including your anaesthetist) before any planned procedures.**

Side Effects

Common Side Effects

- Nausea
- Constipation or Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Indigestion
- Abdominal pain

These usually decrease over time. They are more likely to occur just after you inject and when you increase your dose. Gradually increasing the dose may help.

Uncommon side effects

- Headache
- Tiredness or dizziness
- Injection site reactions
- Increased heart rate
- Dehydration e.g. dry mouth, increased thirst, dark yellow urine
- Changes to mood and behaviours

Serious Side Effects – Seek Urgent Medical Help

Side Effect	Symptoms
Acute Pancreatitis	Severe, persistent stomach pain that may radiate to the back, with or without vomiting and fever.
Acute Gallbladder Problems	Intense pain in the upper abdomen, fever, yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice), and pale-coloured stools.
Acute Kidney Problems	Dehydration caused by severe vomiting and diarrhoea.
Severe Allergic Reactions	Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, difficulty breathing, severe rash, or a very fast heartbeat.
Thyroid swelling and thyroid cancer	This has not been observed in human studies; however, symptoms may include a lump or mass in the neck, difficulty swallowing or breathing, hoarseness.
Diabetic Retinopathy & Non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy	If you have had diabetic eye disease your symptoms may get worse temporarily. These medicines may contribute to rare sight loss.
Hypoglycaemia (if you also take diabetes medications like insulin or sulfonylureas)	Dizziness, confusion, irritability, headache, and a fast heartbeat. Speak to your prescriber.
Gastroparesis	Paralysis of the stomach, which stops emptying altogether.

For more details, see the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

Managing side effects

If you feel sick you can try:

- Eating smaller more frequent meals
- Eating slowly and stopping when satisfied
- Not lying down soon after eating
- Not to be too active after eating
- Increasing fluid intake of clear fluids (taking small sips, or avoiding drinking with meals)
- Avoiding hot, sugary, spicy, fatty, fried, strong-smelling foods
- Getting fresh air and light exercise

If you are constipated, you can try:

- Increasing fibre gradually – e.g. wholegrains, oats, fruits, vegetables, pulses, and nuts.
- Increasing daily physical activity
- Drinking 1.5 - 2 litres a day of high-mineral water, tea, coffee, or sugar-free fluids.
- Eating 2-3 kiwi fruits a day or rye bread
- Using psyllium or magnesium oxide supplements, or probiotics for at least 4 weeks

If you have diarrhoea you can try:

- Drinking plenty of clear fluids to replace fluids lost
- Reducing foods that may worsen loose stools e.g. caffeinated drinks, alcohol, fizzy drinks and sugar-free products containing sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol.

**If vomiting or diarrhoea is severe speak to your prescriber.
You may need to stop your medicine until you feel better.**

Report serious side effects or fake products

As these medicines are still quite new, they are monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. If you have had a serious side effect or a defective or fake product, or know someone who has, please report it at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or scan the QR code.



Diet and Activity

Food noise

These medicines may reduce 'food noise' and constant thinking about food. However, if you have a difficult relationship with food, such as binge eating or emotional eating, these medicines may not work as well. Taste changes may also lead to low mood.



You can find information on supporting your wellbeing by scanning the QR code or going to <https://services.nhslothian.scot/wellbeinglothian/>.

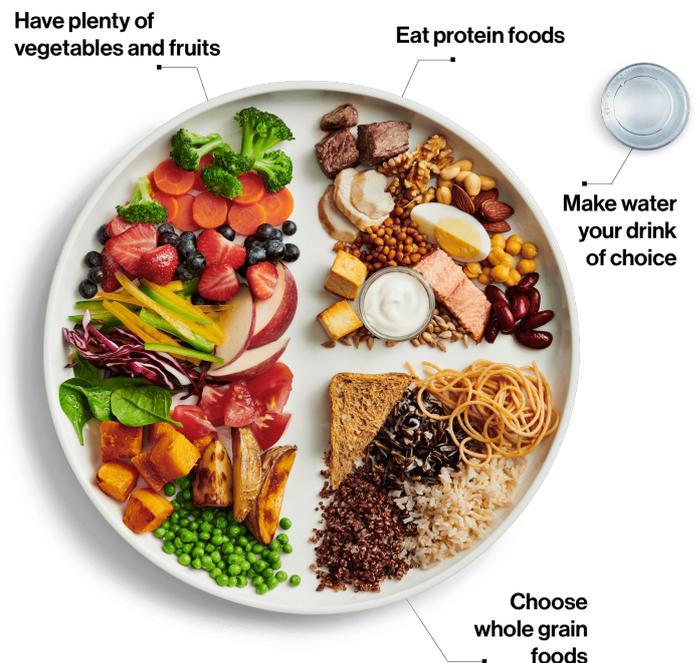
Eating too little, or skipping meals, could lead to not getting enough protein, energy or vitamins and minerals and make you feel tired. You might experience symptoms of deficiencies, such as hair loss, bone pain, pale skin and weakened immune system etc. **What** you eat is still important to make sure you are getting everything you need.

Healthy diet habits

- Aim to have regular meals - **3 small meals a day**
- Plan **healthy snacks** to avoid long gaps between meals
- Practice **eating slowly** and stop when comfortably full
- **Drink plenty of fluids** to avoid dehydration
- Keep a food and symptom **diary** to be mindful of patterns

Aim for a **balanced plate** including whole foods rich in protein, fibre, healthy fats and complex carbohydrates. Each meal should ideally include:

- **Protein:** ¼ of your plate
- **Fruit/Vegetables:** ½ of your plate
- **Complex Carbohydrates:** ¼ of your plate
- **Healthy Fats:** thumb-sized portion.



Eat more of these foods



Protein-rich foods - to maintain muscle health.

Examples: lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, pulses, nuts, seeds, soya (e.g. tofu), and dairy (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt).

Whole fruits and vegetables - to provide essential vitamins and minerals. These can be fresh, frozen or tinned.

Complex carbohydrates - to support digestion.

Examples: wholegrain bread, brown rice, brown pasta, potatoes, oats, beans and pulses.

Healthy fats - to promote heart health and aid vitamin absorption.

Examples: olive oil, rapeseed oil, nuts, seeds, avocados and oily fish.

Sugar free fluids - Drink plenty throughout the day.

Eat less of these foods



High-fat and fried foods - these foods slow digestion which can worsen nausea.

Highly processed foods - these foods are often low in fibre and high in unhealthy fats, sugar and salt. **Examples:** fast food, some ready meals and oven foods, crisps and packaged snacks.

Sugary foods and drinks - these can cause rapid changes in blood sugar and impact your hunger and energy.

Examples: sugary drinks, pastries, cakes and biscuits, ice cream, sweets and chocolate.

Alcohol - this may worsen nausea and dehydration and affect your ability to process the medication.

Supplements

Try to follow a healthy balanced diet to get all the nutrients your body needs. If your appetite is very reduced over a long period of time, or if you start to develop symptoms of deficiencies, **speak to your prescriber**. They may discuss taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement daily.



This dietary advice is for the general population. If you have specific dietary requirements, speak to your healthcare team or a Registered Dietitian.

Healthy activity habits

- Start with **gentle activity** e.g. walking, stretching, housework. Make a start today – it is never too late!
- **Gradually increase** the intensity as you feel able, some is good, more is better!
- Wait a few hours **after eating** before exercising to prevent feeling sick
- Maybe plan a **rest day** on the day after your injection
- Try **short bursts** of activity, every minute counts!
- Have a **light snack before exercising** for energy e.g. a piece of fruit
- **Stay hydrated** whilst exercising
- To keep your muscles, bones and joints strong, do strength-based activity – e.g. squats, push-ups, lunges, weight training, yoga, carrying heavy shopping.
- Try to have a consistent sleep schedule to manage energy levels
- **Find something you enjoy. This will help you to continue doing it long term.**

When you lose weight quickly, you may lose muscle and bone mass. It is important to lose weight gradually. For information scan the QR code or go to www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/strength-and-resistance.

