



# GLP-1 Info Pack

WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY  
WORK, & THE PROS AND  
CONS OF TAKING THEM



# GLP-1 BASICS

## *What are they?*

GLP-1 meds have taken the world by storm. Everywhere you look, celebrities and social media influencers are hailing them as the new weight loss miracle.

But what *are* these drugs exactly? And how do they work? Keep reading to learn everything you need to know about GLP-1 drugs.

## What are GLP-1 Agonists?

GLP-1 agonists are a class of drugs used to treat type 2 diabetes, and more recently, obesity. They mimic the action of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), a hormone your body makes naturally.

The GLP-1 hormone lowers your blood sugar. But it can also help with weight loss. Here's a look at how this hormone helps your body:



## What the GLP-1 Hormone Does

- **Boosts insulin.** GLP-1 triggers your pancreas to secrete insulin, a hormone that gets glucose out of your blood and into your cells.
- **Blocks glucagon.** Glucagon is a hormone that raises your blood sugar. GLP-1 suppresses glucagon to prevent more glucose from entering your bloodstream.
- **Slow digestion.** GLP-1 makes your stomach empty more slowly. This can slow glucose absorption and lessen blood sugar spikes.
- **Increases satiety.** GLP-1 affects the parts of your brain that help you feel full. This can reduce your appetite.

The GLP-1 hormone breaks down rapidly in your body within minutes. But GLP-1 meds are formulated to stay in your bloodstream for days or even weeks.

# BENEFITS OF GLP-1 MEDS

*Why take them?*

GLP-1 medications mimic the GLP-1 hormone and offer three main benefits:



## **Lower blood sugar**

GLP-1 drugs reduce your blood sugar. Because of this, they may help people with type 2 diabetes manage their blood sugar better. Currently, several GLP-1 meds are approved to treat type 2 diabetes. More on this on the next page...



## **Weight management**

A few GLP-1 meds are approved to treat obesity. Some doctors also prescribe other GLP-1 agonists "off-label" for weight loss. Research shows GLP-1 meds can help people lose up to 15% of their weight over 68 weeks. Results vary depending on the med and dosage.



## **May prevent heart issues**

Some research suggests GLP-1 meds may benefit your heart. One study found semaglutide (a type of GLP-1 drug) reduced the risk of heart attack and stroke in people who had heart disease or obesity. But more research is needed.

# GLP-1 AGONISTS

*The complete list*

Ozempic gets all the attention. But there are ten GLP-1 meds on the market and more on the way. Some are FDA-approved for type 2 diabetes. Others are approved for weight management to treat obesity.

Most GLP-1 agonists come as injections. Some are taken daily, and others once a week.

GLP-1 drug	FDA approval status	Who it's for	Dosage
Ozempic (semaglutide injection)	Type 2 diabetes	Adults	once a week
Rybelsus (semaglutide tablets)	Type 2 diabetes	Adults	once a day
Mounjaro (tirzepatide)	Type 2 diabetes	Adults	once a week
Byetta (exenatide)	Type 2 diabetes	Adults	twice a day
Bydureon (exenatide)	Type 2 diabetes	Adults and children (ages 10+)	once a week
Trulicity (dulaglutide)	Type 2 diabetes	Children (ages 10+)	once a week
Victoza (liraglutide)	Type 2 diabetes	Children (ages 10+)	once a day
Saxenda (liraglutide)	Weight management	Adults and children (ages 12+)	once a day
Wegovy (semaglutide injection)	Weight management	Adults and children (ages 12+)	once a week
Zepbound (tirzepatide)	Weight management	Adults	once a week

# RISKS OF GLP-1 MEDS

*What are the side effects?*

Like all medications, GLP-1 agonists have risks and potential side effects.

**Nausea** is by far the most common side effect and happens for roughly 50% of people.

Other gastrointestinal side effects include **diarrhea, constipation,** and **vomiting**.



**Rashes at the injection site** and **headaches** are also common. Some people have reported infections like upper respiratory infections and urinary tracts infections as well.

Side effects vary depending on the med and dosage. They usually lessen as your body adjusts.

## Risks of GLP-1 Agonists

While side effects are unpleasant, these drugs also carry some serious risks. GLP-1 agonists may increase the risk of:

- Pancreatitis
- Thyroid cancer
- Gastroparesis (delayed gastric emptying)
- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Gall bladder disease
- Kidney issues

# CONS OF GLP-1 MEDS

*Are they worth it?*

Side effects aside, there are several other downsides to these drugs:

## Cost

Most health plans don't pay for weight loss medications. And GLP-1 agonists are expensive. A one-month supply can run you \$1,000 or more without insurance. For most people, the high costs make these meds out of reach.

## When taken in high doses, it is difficult to come off the drug

There is some studies that show to maintain weight loss, you have to continue to take the drug. Otherwise, the weight may come back. One study found that a year after stopping Ozempic, people regained two-thirds of the weight they'd lost. The cost of these drugs makes it hard for most people to take them long-term. Research shows only 32% of patients on GLP-1 meds take them for them over a year.

## May lead to disordered eating

While these drugs do help with weight loss, they don't change your relationship with food. In fact, they could make it worse. GLP-1 meds suppress your appetite. Some experts believe taking them could cause people to develop disordered eating patterns. More research is needed, but people with a history of eating disorders should proceed with caution. It may be a good idea to work with a nutrition expert to help adjust your eating habits in a healthy way.

# GLP-1 WEIGHT LOSS MEDS

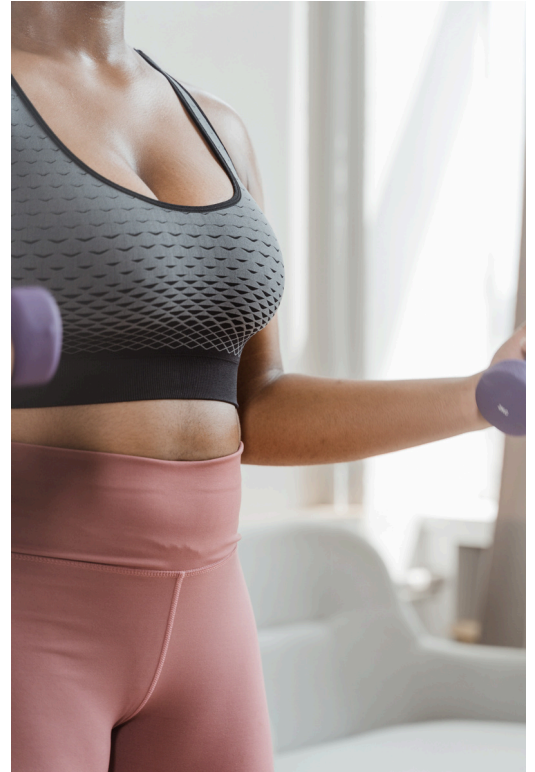
*The bottom line*

GLP-1 meds show promise in the fight against obesity. They lower your blood sugar and suppress your appetite to spur weight loss.

But they're *not* a weight loss magic bullet. They come at a high cost and have many risks and potential side effects.

There's so much hype surrounding these drugs with many touting them as a weight loss cure-all. But the reality is, there is no quick fix for obesity.

**It takes a multipronged approach for weight loss to stick.**



A nutritious diet, exercise, sleep, and stress management, and creating a new relationship with food all play a role. Otherwise, the weight will just come back. While GLP-1 meds may have a place in some people's weight loss journey, **real change comes from making simple day-to-day choices.**

## References

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