

Glucagon-Like Peptide (GLP-1) Medications

GLP-1 medications are prescribed for type 2 diabetes and weight loss.

HOW IT WORKS

- Stimulates insulin secretion after oral glucose intake
- Delays gastric emptying, which inhibits the production of glucagon by the pancreas in patients with elevated blood sugar
- Increases glucose uptake in muscles and lowers glucose production in the liver, causing increased fullness
- Enhances the feedback system in the brain to turn down “food noise” to assist with portion control

OUTCOMES

- Weight-loss results are dependent on lifestyle changes made while taking this medication.
- Weight loss with this medication is variable. Patients can lose around 10–20% of their current weight.
- Medication has been shown to lower HA1C by an average of 1%. Goal HgbA1C is <5.7%.
- Other benefits shown include lowering blood pressure and lowering cholesterol.

SIDE EFFECTS

Common

- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Itching at injection site
- Fatigue
- Gastroparesis
- Mood changes

Severe

- Acute pancreatitis
- Acute kidney injury due to severe vomiting and diarrhea
- Anaphylactic reaction

IMPORTANT THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Medication is an injection administered once a day or once a week (except oral Rybelsus).
- This medication can lead to low blood glucose if taken with other diabetes medications. Your medical provider may discuss ways to monitor blood glucose at home.
- Your medical provider will monitor blood glucose/ HgbA1C and kidney function through routine labs.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- This medication should be avoided in those who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant.
- This medication is not recommended for those with personal or family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia or medullary thyroid cancer.
- This medication should be avoided in those who have history of pancreatitis.



If you are having any procedure that requires anesthesia, you are required to stop your GLP-1 medication one week before your procedure.

INSURANCE COVERAGE/PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Insurance covers GLP-1 medications when the patient has a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. Insurance might not cover this medication when being used for weight loss. If the provider and the patient have determined a GLP-1 medication would benefit the patient for weight loss, the patient is responsible for calling their insurance company to determine coverage before the medication is ordered. The patient is responsible for asking the insurance exactly which GLP-1 medication is covered (if any are covered for weight loss and/or diabetes). Patient is responsible for asking insurance the percentage of coverage and the amount of out-of-pocket expense they should expect to pay. After speaking with the insurance company, the patient is responsible for calling the provider's nurse with this information. Then the provider's nurse will initiate the prior authorization process to obtain that GLP-1 medication.

NATIONWIDE SHORTAGES

All GLP-1 medications are currently part of nationwide shortages. The FDA drug shortage list, available at [fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-shortages](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-shortages), is a great reference. This website will tell you if the U.S. is experiencing a shortage of a specific medication, why there is a shortage and sometimes an estimated time frame for when the shortage might end. Your provider will give you a paper prescription you can take to a pharmacy that has the GLP-1 medication being prescribed. If you take the paper prescription to a pharmacy and decide you want to use a different pharmacy, you can transfer that prescription between pharmacies.

GLP-1 MEDICATIONS

FDA approved for weight loss *(this does not mean insurance will cover medication)*

- Saxenda (Liraglutide) | Once daily injection
- Wegovy (Semaglutide) | Once weekly injection
- Zepbound (Tirzepatide) | Once weekly injection

FDA approved for type 2 diabetes melitus

- Trulicity (Dulaglutide) | Once weekly injection
- Victoza (Liraglutide) | Once daily injection
- Ozempic (Semaglutide) | Once weekly injection
- Mounjaro (Tirzepatide) | Once weekly injection
- Byetta (Exenatide) | Twice daily injection
- Rybelsus (Semaglutide) | Oral

REFERENCE

Collins L, Costello RA. *Glucagon-like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonist*. 2022, November 26. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK551568/>