

Weight Loss Injections

Questions and Answers

WHAT ARE WEIGHT LOSS INJECTIONS?

There are two injections currently FDA-approved for weight loss - semaglutide (Wegovy), and tirzepatide (Zepbound).

These same medications were initially FDA-approved for the control of blood sugar in diabetics, but under different brand names (Ozempic = Wegovy, and Mounjaro = Zepbound).

HOW DO THEY WORK?

These medications help with weight loss by slowing down gastric emptying which creates a feeling of satiety (fullness) and reduces appetite.

These medications are injected on a weekly basis and the dose is increased every 4 weeks.

These medications can be used as either short-term or long-term aids to weight loss.

HOW MUCH WEIGHT WILL I LOSE?

Weight loss varies from person to person, but typical patients lose 10 to 15 percent of their body fat by the third month in conjunction with dieting and exercising.

ARE WEIGHT LOSS INJECTIONS RIGHT FOR ME?

These medications are for people committed to long-term changes in their eating habits. If you go back to the same eating habits that caused you to gain weight initially, you will regain all the weight that you lost and achieve no results.

CAN ANYONE TAKE THESE INJECTIONS?

There are specific medical considerations which need to be addressed before weight loss injections can be recommended.

These medications should be avoided if any of the following apply to you:

- Taking diabetes medications
- Pregnant or plan to be pregnant in the next few months
- Breast feeding
- Gallbladder disease (doesn't apply if your gallbladder was removed)
- History of pancreatitis
- Personal history or family history of medullary thyroid cancer
- Personal history or family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN2)

DO WEIGHT LOSS INJECTIONS HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Yes, but keep in mind that some people are more sensitive than others and some are brought on by overeating.

The following side effects have been reported by the manufacturers:

Semaglutide (Wegovy/Ozempic) side effects

- Nausea: 16% to 20% (vs. 6% on placebo)
- Diarrhea: 9% (vs. 2% on placebo)
- Vomiting: 5% to 9% (vs. 2% on placebo)
- Constipation: 3% to 5% (vs. 2% on placebo)
- Heartburn (dyspepsia): 3% to 4% (vs. 2% on placebo)
- Stomach (abdominal) pain: 6% to 7% (vs. 5% on placebo)
- Other reported side effects included: hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), injection site reactions, elevated amylase and lipase (pancreas enzymes), cholelithiasis (gallstones), increases in heart rate, and fatigue, dysgeusia (altered taste), allergic reactions and dizziness.

Tirzepatide (Zepbound/Mounjaro) side effects

- Nausea: 25% to 28% (vs. 8% placebo)
- Diarrhea: 19 to 23% (vs. 8% placebo)
- Belching / burping: 4 to 5% (vs. 1% placebo)
- Vomiting: 8 to 13% (vs. 2% placebo)
- Constipation: 11 to 17% (vs. 5% placebo)
- Stomach area pain: 9 to 10% (vs. 5% placebo)
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease: 4 to 5% (vs. 2% on placebo)
- Heartburn: 9 to 10% (vs. 4% placebo)
- Other reported side effects for Zepbound included injection site reactions, tiredness, allergic reactions, and hair loss.