

Understanding GLP-1 Medications

A Patient Guide to Semaglutide, Tirzepatide, and GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

What Are GLP-1 Medications?

GLP-1 receptor agonists (glucagon-like peptide-1) are a class of medications originally developed for type 2 diabetes that have shown remarkable effectiveness for weight management. They work by mimicking a natural hormone your body produces after eating.

How GLP-1 Medications Work

- Slow gastric emptying — food stays in your stomach longer, keeping you full
- Reduce appetite signals in the brain — you feel satisfied with smaller portions
- Improve insulin sensitivity — helps your body process blood sugar more effectively
- Reduce glucagon secretion — prevents your liver from releasing excess sugar

Currently Available GLP-1 Medications

Medication	Brand	Frequency	FDA Approved For
Semaglutide	Ozempic	Weekly injection	Type 2 diabetes
Semaglutide	Wegovy	Weekly injection	Weight management
Semaglutide	Rybelsus	Daily oral tablet	Type 2 diabetes
Liraglutide	Victoza	Daily injection	Type 2 diabetes
Liraglutide	Saxenda	Daily injection	Weight management
Tirzepatide	Mounjaro	Weekly injection	Type 2 diabetes
Tirzepatide	Zepbound	Weekly injection	Weight management

Tirzepatide Note

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro/Zepbound) is a dual GIP/GLP-1 receptor agonist, meaning it activates two hormone pathways. Clinical trials show it may produce greater weight loss than semaglutide alone.

Common Side Effects

Most side effects are GI-related and typically improve over the first 4-8 weeks as your body adjusts:

- **Nausea** — most common, especially during dose escalation

- **Vomiting and diarrhea** — usually mild and temporary
- **Constipation** — from slowed gastric motility
- **Abdominal pain** — typically mild
- **Injection site reactions** — redness or itching at injection site

When to Contact Your Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you experience:

- Severe or persistent vomiting that prevents you from keeping fluids down
- Signs of pancreatitis: severe upper abdominal pain radiating to your back
- Signs of gallbladder problems: right upper quadrant pain after eating
- Symptoms of low blood sugar: shakiness, sweating, confusion
- Allergic reaction: swelling, difficulty breathing, severe rash

What to Expect: The First 12 Weeks

Weeks 1-4: Starting dose. Nausea is most common during this period. Eat smaller meals. Weight loss may begin within the first 2 weeks.

Weeks 5-8: First dose escalation. GI side effects may briefly return then improve. Most patients notice reduced appetite and portion sizes.

Weeks 9-12: Continued dose titration. GI symptoms typically stabilize. Steady weight loss of 1-2 pounds per week is expected.

Need Personalized Guidance?

MilenAi Digestive Health offers telehealth consultations with a registered nurse specializing in gastroenterology and digestive health. Get one-on-one support for your questions, medication management, and care coordination.

Schedule a Telehealth Visit

milenai.health | consult@milenai.health

Licensed RN — Nevada, California, New York

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