



American Heart Association®

Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic
Health Initiative™

Understanding Medications That May Be Prescribed for Weight Management

Weight plays an important role in your heart, kidney, and metabolic health (how your body creates, stores and uses energy). Together, this is called cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic health (CKM health).

Managing Weight



Managing weight can help these systems work better and may lower risk for conditions like heart disease, kidney disease, and type 2 diabetes.

In some cases, health care professionals may recommend medications to help you lose or manage your weight. Along with healthy eating and physical activity to support overall health goals. Different types of medications are available, and decisions can be made together with the health care team to find the best fit.



heart.org/UnderstandingWeight



MEDICATION TYPE	WHAT THEY DO	COMMON SIDE EFFECTS	EXAMPLES
Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonists (GLP-1RAs)	These medications slow digestion helping people feel full longer and can support healthy blood sugar. They can be taken as a pill or as a weekly or daily injection. Both oral and injectable GLP-1 options are FDA-approved for weight management.	- Nausea and vomiting - Diarrhea and constipation - Abdominal pain or distension - Indigestion and reflux - Belching and flatulence (passing gas) - Hair loss - Fatigue and headache - Dizziness - Injection site reaction (redness, itching, rash) - Low blood sugar or increased pancreatic enzymes - Fever or inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract	semaglutide, liraglutide, orforglipron
Glucose-dependent Insulinotropic Polypeptide/Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonists (GIP/GLP-1RAs) - Dual Hormone Agonists	These medications work on more than one hormone to lower appetite and slow digestion. Dual-hormone medications such as tirzepatide are weekly injections.	- Nausea and vomiting - Diarrhea and constipation - Abdominal pain, indigestion, or reflux - Belching - Fatigue and headache - Pain, bruising, itching, rash or redness at the injection site - Hair loss	tirzepatide
Lipase Inhibitor (Fat Absorption Blockers)	These medications stop some fat from being absorbed by the body. They are taken as a pill with meals that contain fat.	- Oily or fatty stools - Gas with oily discharge - Sudden urge to have bowel movements or go more often - Unable to fully control bowel movements (incontinence)	orlistat
Sympathomimetics + Anticonvulsant/ Opioid Antagonist + Antidepressant (Appetite Suppressants/ Neuroactive Agents)	These medications help lower hunger and food cravings by affecting signals in the brain. They are typically taken as a pill for short-term use.	- Trouble sleeping - Dry mouth, altered taste - Fast heartbeat or higher blood pressure - Headache - Feeling dizzy - Restlessness or feeling “on edge” - Numbness or tingling sensations - Constipation or diarrhea - Nausea or vomiting	phentermine, phentermine/ topiramate, naltrexone/bupropion

Using Medications Safely



Medications work best when used safely and exactly as directed. Guidance from a health care professional is important, and any side effects should be shared right away.

Here are some ways to stay on track:

- ☒ Take or inject medication exactly as prescribed.
- ☒ Do not change the dose on your own.
- ☒ Share a list of all other medications and supplements being taken with your prescribing health care professional.
- ☒ Report any concerns or side effects right away.
- ☒ Keep all follow-up appointments.

Remember, support is available.

Managing weight and improving CKM health is a journey.

Support is available from the health care team at every step on the path to better health.



For more information, visit [**heart.org/UnderstandingWeight**](https://heart.org/UnderstandingWeight).

Disclaimer

Important Note: The generic names are shown to help you understand what medication you may be taking. The American Heart Association® does not recommend or endorse any specific medication. Not all possible side effects are listed. Talk with your health care professional if you have questions or concerns about your medication or side effects.

[**heart.org/UnderstandingWeight**](https://heart.org/UnderstandingWeight)



Lilly is a Champion sponsor of the American Heart Association's Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic Health Initiative.