

# Anti-Obesity Medicines

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## Safety considerations before taking the medicines



**Please be aware there have been reports of potential misuse of anti-obesity medicines for unauthorised indications, which may have contributed to several suspected adverse drug reactions.** <sup>(1)</sup>

- These medicines are prescription-only medicines to be used under medical supervision and should only be prescribed by a registered healthcare professional.
- If obtaining a private prescription (from a non-NHS prescriber), ensure that this is dispensed from authorised sources, such as registered pharmacies, to avoid the risk of receiving falsified medicines and experiencing adverse drug reactions.



**These medicines are not intended as a short-term treatment of obesity. Long-term use is required to maintain improvements in weight and health.**

- Weight regain has been observed after stopping anti-obesity medicines. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Improvements in health (e.g. blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose) may also return to previous baseline as weight regains.



**As with all medicines, the manufacturer has issued warnings, precautions and contraindications that must be assessed before obtaining a prescription.**

- If obtaining a private prescription, please provide correct, up-to-date details of your medical history to ensure prescribing is safe, and to reduce the risk of adverse drug reactions.
- Please speak to a medical professional before you obtain a prescription if you are unsure.

## Medicines you might use

You may have been prescribed one of the following:

liraglutide (Saxenda®)	semaglutide (Wegovy®)	tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)
		

## Lifestyle changes

These medicines work best if you eat a balanced diet with reduced portion size and exercise regularly.

## Tips for eating a healthy balanced diet

Your appetite will reduce being on these medicines but you still need to ensure you are achieving adequate nutrition:

Aim to have 3 regular meals a day

Include a source of fibre at each meal to prevent constipation

Try to use smaller plate to reduce portion sizes

Practice eating slowly and stop when feeling full

Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration

Include a source of protein at each meal

- Follow the QR code to check your portion sizes  
[www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-portion-sizes.html](http://www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-portion-sizes.html)



- Aim for a balanced plate like the Eatwell Guide (see overleaf) to ensure you're getting all the nutrients your body needs:

# Eatwell Guide

## Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Sugars	Salt
1044kJ 250kcal	3.0g	34g	0.9g
LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 497kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower  
in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Fruit and vegetables every day



Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar  
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates



Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins  
Eat more beans and pulses. 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily.  
Eat less red and processed meat.



Dairy and alternatives  
Choose lower fat and lower sugar options



Oil & spreads  
Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.  
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

## Common side effects

- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Constipation
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Feeling weak/tired

These side effects are common and usually decrease over time. Gradually increasing the dose will help tolerate these medications.

Speak to your prescriber if you experience any of the following:

- Allergic reactions
- Dizziness/light-headedness, sweating, shaking, weakness, confusion
- Increased heart rate/pulse
- Fever
- Changes in urination frequency, dark yellow urine
- Dry mouth/increased thirst
- Excessive diarrhoea or vomiting
- Worsening vision
- Development of a mass in the neck, difficulty swallowing or breathing, hoarseness
- Significant changes to mood and behaviours
- Persistent severe abdominal pain (sometimes radiating to the back). **If this occurs, discontinue and seek urgent medical care.**

**Please seek urgent medical attention if any of these are severe.**

## Managing the side effects <sup>(3)</sup>

If you **feel sick** you can try:

- Eating slowly and stopping when satisfied
- Eating smaller more frequent meals
- Not lying down soon after eating
- Not to be too active after eating
- Increasing fluid intake of clear fluids (in small sips, and not too much at once)
- Avoiding hot, sugary, spicy, fatty, fried, strong-smelling foods
- Getting fresh air and light exercise
- Keeping a food diary of foods and meal timings to help identify triggers.



**If you are constipated, you can try:**

- Eating more fibre – e.g. wholegrains, oats, fruits, vegetables, pulses, and nuts.
- Increasing physical activity
- Drinking 2-3 litres a day of water, tea, coffee, or sugar-free fluids.

**If you have loose stools, you can try:**

- Temporarily reducing high fibre foods – gradually reintroduce them upon improvement in symptoms
- Drinking plenty of clear fluids to replace fluids lost
- Reducing dairy products, coffee, alcohol, laxatives and products containing sweeteners ending in “ol” (e.g. sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol).

**If vomiting or diarrhoea is severe and persisting, please withhold the drug and speak to your prescriber.**

**Tips for improving wellbeing**

These medicines are not suitable if you have an eating disorder and may not be effective if you have a difficult relationship with food, such as binge eating. You can find more information about these at the wellbeing website below or please scan the QR code:

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/wellbeinglothian/>



SCAN ME

**Tips for increasing your physical activity**

To prevent muscle loss whilst taking these medicines, it's important to engage in activity that keeps your muscles, bones and joints strong – e.g. squats, using weights or carrying heavy bags. For further information go to the website below or scan the QR code:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/strength-and-resistance](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/strength-and-resistance)



SCAN ME



## Contact Us

Email: [loth.weightmanagement@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.weightmanagement@nhs.scot)

Phone: 0131 537 9169 (Monday to Friday 9am-4pm or leave a message).

Website: <https://services.nhslthian.scot/awmt2d/>

If any issues out with our working hours, please contact your GP or NHS 24 (dial 111).



## References

- (1) <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/glp-1-receptor-agonists-reminder-of-the-potential-side-effects-and-to-be-aware-of-the-potential-for-misuse>
- (2) <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9542252/pdf/DOM-24-1553.pdf>
- (3) <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm12010145>