

DEVELOP LASTING CHANGE

Your Guide to Starting GLP-1 Medications



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Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Section I: What are GLP-1 Medications	04
Section II: What to expect	05
Section III: Common side effects	06
Section IV: How to give yourself an injection	08
Section V: Things to remember	09
Conclusion	10

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Southern Medical Weight Loss and Wellness!

You've made the commitment to improving your health and well-being! Taking the time to educate yourself and make informed decisions is crucial when embarking on a weight loss journey or starting new medications. This e-book will be a valuable resource to help guide you through this process and provide answers to any concerns you may have along the way. Remember, small steps each day can lead to significant progress in achieving your health goals.



“I am thrilled that you have placed your trust in me to assist you in reaching your weight loss goals. Rest assured, I will be by your side to encourage and help you every step of the way!”

Jennifer Bradley, NP-C

SECTION I

What are GLP-1 Medications?

GLP-1 Agonists, short for Glucagon Like Peptide 1 Agonists are highly effective medications that have been proven to induce significant weight loss. GLP-1's such as Semaglutide, mimic a hormone called GLP-1 that is naturally produced in our intestines while eating. This hormone tells our pancreas to increase insulin production and also tells our liver to decrease production of glucagon. Glucagon is a hormone that increases blood glucose (blood sugar) levels. By decreasing glucagon production and increasing insulin availability, you have less of a blood glucose spike after eating, preventing excess glucose to be stored as fat. This hormone also slows down the emptying of food from your stomach, thus creating a longer sensation of feeling full. Weight loss occurs as a result of fewer calories being consumed because you become full much faster, eat less at each sitting, and stay full for longer. GLP-1's also act within the brain to decrease hunger signals and cravings.

Tirzepatide is also a GLP-1 mimicking hormone but has an added benefit of another hormone called Glucose Dependent Insulinotropic Polypeptide, or GIP. When paired with GLP-1, GIP provides additional benefit in increasing insulin production and sensitivity. It can also aid in further lowering the hunger sensation and can help decrease the incidence of nausea that is common with GLP-1's.

Additional Benefits

In addition to their incredible weight loss benefits, GLP-1/GIP's have proven to lower blood pressure, total cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart and vascular disease. They can also improve the effects of chronic inflammation caused by autoimmune diseases and can reverse the effects of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) given their ability to improve insulin sensitivity. They are safe to take long term and can be helpful to keep the weight off even once you have reached your weight loss goals.

SECTION 2

What To Expect



This is the most common question I get when someone is making the choice to start GLP-1's. Specifically "How will I feel?" And "How much weight will I lose?"

And the answer I always give is...Everyone is different and everyone will respond to the medications differently.

For most people, the medication starts working right away and you can begin to tell the effects from the medications shortly after your first dose. Most notably, you will begin to notice that your hunger drive starts to decrease. What this means is, you don't think about food as often as you did before. You simply aren't hungry, except for the times you should feel hungry (meal times). Your cravings start to diminish. You don't think about grabbing a candy bar on the way home from work, or sitting down with chips and salsa while watching TV at night. It is a subtle change and you most likely will go days before realizing that those cravings you used to have are all but gone. On average, most people lose around 1-2lbs per week, however, I want to stress that everyone's results are different. You may not lose at this rate and that is OK!!!

You may notice first that bloating and swelling improves. If you suffer from acne, you'll begin to see this get better. You may even see improvements in joint pain/discomfort. You may notice that energy levels improve and you have more of a desire to exercise and engage in more activity. If you are pre-diabetic, you should see improvements in your A1C levels. You should also see improvements in your cholesterol levels. Again, these changes occur over time, and will likely not be immediate. If you have a Primary Care Physician, I recommend that you disclose the fact that you are taking GLP-1's. They will want to know so that they can keep it in your record.

SECTION 3

Common Side Effects

Common side effects of GLP-1's and what to do to about them

Most people have heard about the not-so great side effects of GLP-1's. **Common complaints are nausea, reflux/heartburn, diarrhea and constipation.** While these symptoms are frequently experienced, they can be offset or diminished by making sure to remember a few key concepts.

Stay Hydrated.

Hydration is an essential component to good health, energy and weight management. Being in a state of dehydration depletes your body of essential micronutrients and minerals. This can make unwanted gastrointestinal symptoms more pronounced. Ensuring adequate hydration also helps to prevent constipation.

Eat smaller portions.

This may come naturally while on GLP-1's, but sometimes it's still tempting to over-indulge at one sitting. Try to avoid this if at all possible. Since one of the mechanisms of action of GLP-1's is that they slow the passage of food through the GI tract (stomach and intestines), over-eating can cause bloating, gas, burping/belching and nausea. Learning to control how much you eat at mealtimes will also help to create permanent habit change.



Eat quality food.

Eating fatty, greasy, heavily processed and sugary foods can cause unwanted GI symptoms. While it may be tempting to eat a greasy hamburger with fries and a soda, you may want to avoid this or eat a small portion of this, especially when just starting out on GLP-1 meds. Make quality protein the focus of your meals and balance your plate with foods high in fiber and healthy fat. Try and eat natural as much as possible. Protein, vegetables and fruits should be essential components of each meal. Eat the rainbow! Choose foods that are naturally colorful - this ensures that you are eating foods rich in micronutrients, minerals and vitamins. As with eating smaller portions, making the switch to a cleaner diet will help you maintain weight loss and overall health. Replacing heavily processed foods with quality natural foods will improve your gut microbiome (replace bad gut bacteria with good gut bacteria), which helps with a multitude of functions throughout the body.

SECTION 3

Common Side Effects Continued

How to prevent common side effects

- **Eat regular meals.** While it can be tempting to skip meals because you don't feel hungry, if you're experiencing nausea/reflux or other symptoms, make sure to eat regular meals following the recommendations above.
- **Move your body.** Regular, purposeful movement and exercise can do wonders for your gut health and motility. Regular exercise helps to regulate bowel function, can improve gastric motility (movement of food through the stomach and intestines) and also improves mood.
- **Taking Miralax can greatly help with constipation.** Take daily if this becomes a problem for you.



SECTION 4

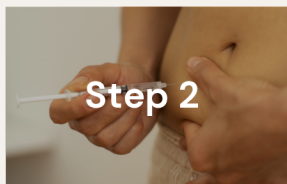
How to give yourself an injection

SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTION

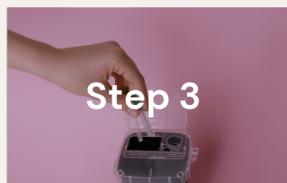
I realize that for some people, the thought of giving yourself a shot is daunting. I want to encourage you that it's not as bad as you think. You can always get a family member or friend to give it to you. Here's your step by step guide.



If this is your first time injecting from a new vial, there will be a small circular piece of metal covering the rubber stopper. Remove this and discard. Clean the rubber stopper with alcohol swab. Gently push the needle into the rubber stopper and then turn the vial upside down so that the syringe is now on the bottom and the vial is upside down on top of the syringe. Gently pull back on the syringe until you've withdrawn the appropriate dose. Gently remove the syringe. Tap lightly to remove any air bubbles and push the stopper until all air has been removed from the syringe. Re apply the cap.



Pinch a small area of skin on your stomach and clean with alcohol swab. Take your syringe and gently insert the needle into the skin. Inject the medication by pushing the stopper until the medication is fully injected. Wait 2-3 seconds, then gently pull the needle out of the skin.



Discard the syringe and needle in a safe space. Keeping an old jar on hand that would normally be discarded (such as a used – and cleaned marinara or pickle jar) is a great way to safely discard all of your used syringes. When the jar is full – throw it away.

SECTION 5

Things to Remember

Key Points to Remember When Starting GLP-1's

- Prior to starting, take photos AND take measurements. You may see non-scale victories first. You may notice that you look thinner or your clothes fit better and you may lose inches before you see the results on the scale.
- Your journey is your own... Don't compare yourself to others. You may not lose weight on the initial dose. That's ok. It takes time. Don't get frustrated when you don't see immediate and dramatic results. Keeping the weight off requires discipline, consistency and lifestyle change!
- If you do not make efforts to change your diet and exercise habits, you will almost certainly gain weight after you stop the medications. It's so important to work on creating a life of balance and wellness
- Limit alcohol!! Avoid over-indulging in alcohol while on GLP-1's. Excess alcohol can lead to severe dehydration and pancreatitis.
- Hydration is key! Make sure you're drinking plenty of water each day, preferably with electrolytes.
- Focus on protein and quality foods. Limit sugary, overly processed, fatty and greasy foods. These will likely make you feel more bloated and cause nausea/reflux. Aim for at least 100 grams of protein each day.



This is the beginning of something great!

Let's focus on creating a sustainable and balanced approach to weight loss that promotes long-term health and well-being. Remember to celebrate every success along the way, both on and off the scale, as you work towards a healthier lifestyle. Cultivating habits that support overall balance will help you maintain a steady weight and good health for years to come.

Embrace a holistic approach to wellness by incorporating a variety of nutritious foods, staying active in ways that bring you joy, and prioritizing self-care practices that nourish your mind, body, and spirit. Remember, progress is not always linear, and setbacks are a natural part of the journey. Be kind to yourself and stay committed to your goals, knowing that each small step forward is a victory in itself. By focusing on sustainable habits and positive changes, you'll not only achieve your weight loss goals but also cultivate a healthier, happier life in the process.



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