

WEGOVY®

What is it?

WEGOVY® is a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist indicated to use along with a reduced calorie diet and increased physical activity for chronic weight management. It works in the brain to suppress appetite. It makes you feel less hungry between meals and makes you feel full sooner once you start eating. It helps you lose weight and keep the weight off.

How much weight will I lose?

The average weight loss is around 10-15% of starting body weight but this could be less or more depending on several factors.

Who is it for?

The medication is indicated for adults with an initial body mass index (BMI) of • 30 kg/m² or greater (obesity) or • 27 kg/m² or greater (overweight) in the presence of at least one weight-related comorbid condition (e.g., hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, or dyslipidemia) or children aged 12 years and older with an initial BMI at the 95th percentile or greater for age and sex (obesity).

Are there benefits other than weight loss?

People with a history of heart disease may reduce their risk of having a heart attack or stroke or dying from a heart event taking this medication.

Who should not use it?

People with a personal or family history of medullary thyroid cancer or multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2 should not use the medication due to a possible increased risk of medullary thyroid cancer in this population. Pregnant or lactating women or those planning pregnancy in the next 2 months should not use the medication.

How is it taken?

The medication is taken by injection into the fat of the upper arm, abdomen or thigh using a prefilled injection device with a hidden needle.

How is it dosed?

Wegovy® has 5 doses. The starting dose is 0.25 mg weekly. The dose increases the next month to 0.5 mg weekly and then to 1.0 mg weekly the following month and then to 1.7 mg weekly on month 4. You can then stay on 1.7 mg weekly or increase the dose further to 2.4 mg which is the highest dose.

What are possible side effects?

The most common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal pain, headache, fatigue, dyspepsia, dizziness, abdominal distension, belching, flatulence, gastroenteritis, and gastroesophageal reflux disease. It can slow stomach emptying. Very rarely people have developed serious problems such as pancreatitis or bowel obstruction. It is

important to stop the medication and inform the doctor if you develop severe abdominal pain while taking the medication. The medication can increase the risk for low blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes taking other medications that lower blood glucose.

How long do you stay on it?

People stay on the medication for different lengths of time as determined in discussion with their physicians. The medication is safe for long term use. The medication should be held 1-2 weeks before a surgical procedure requiring general anesthesia.

Will my health plan pay for it?

If you meet criteria for treatment (see indications above) and your health plan covers weight loss medications (not all plans do) then it may be covered after your physician does a “prior authorization.”

What is the difference between Wegovy® and Ozempic®?

Wegovy® and Ozempic® both contain the same active ingredient, semaglutide. Wegovy® is marketed and indicated for obesity. Ozempic® is marketed and indicated for type 2 diabetes. The pen injection device is different. The dosing is slightly different. Wegovy® has 5 doses (0.25, 0.5, 1.0, 1.7 and 2.4 mg) whereas Ozempic® has 4 doses (0.25, 0.5, 1.0 and 2.0 mg). Ozempic® is supplied in a prefilled multidose pen device and you need to attach the needle. Your doctor cannot ask your insurance company to pay for Ozempic® for you for weight management if you do not also have a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

Note: See the manufacturer’s prescribing information for complete details.