

# Vantage Pharmacy

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## Opening Times

Monday - Friday 8.30am to 7pm

Saturday, and Sunday Closed

## Bank Holidays Closed

# Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for January 2025

1. What is Wegovy?
2. What is it used for?
3. Is its use approved of by the NHS?
4. How do I get it?
5. How do I get referred?
6. How do I use it?
7. How effective is it?
8. Do I still need to diet and exercise?
9. Are there any side effects or long-term risks?
10. How does Wegovy work?



## Answers on the bottom of P2

## Wegovy and obesity

There has been a lot of talk in the media about the new weight loss drugs that have become available recently so we thought it would be a good idea to explain what these are, how they work and what the side effects may be.

The drug that everybody is talking about is semaglutide. This is the generic name, and it has two trade names - Wegovy and Ozempic. Semaglutide belongs to a group of drugs called GLP-1 agonists, GLP-1 analogues, GLP-1 RAs or incretin mimetics. They were designed to treat diabetes but have been found to help with weight loss as well.

Wegovy is one of two weight loss injections available on the NHS, the other being Saxenda (liraglutide), which along with diet and physical activity, can be used to manage excess weight and obesity in some people.

They are only available through specialist weight clinics. Your GP can refer you to a

clinic to see if Wegovy could be suitable for you.

Wegovy comes as a pre-filled injector pen. You can inject yourself weekly, under the skin in the upper arms, stomach, thighs or buttocks.

## How does it work?

Wegovy acts on areas of the brain which are involved in regulating your appetite. It increases feelings of fullness, reduces feelings of hunger and reduces the preference for high fat foods. It also reduces blood sugar by promoting the release of insulin when blood sugar levels are high. Another name for semaglutide is Ozempic, which is used to treat type 2 diabetes because it can lower blood sugar.

You can be treated with Wegovy in a specialist weight management service if you have:

- A weight related health condition, including high blood pressure, high

- cholesterol or cardiovascular disease.
- Obesity, classed as a BMI of 35 or more
- Tried to lose weight through conventional treatment, which hasn't worked.

You may also be prescribed Wegovy if you have a BMI of 30 to 34 and have been referred to a specialist weight management clinic. If you're from an Asian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean background you may qualify for Wegovy with a lower BMI.

### **How effective is it?**

A study on Wegovy published in 2021, funded by the drug's makers Novo Nordisk, looked at whether adults with obesity can achieve weight loss with one weekly semaglutide. The study showed that when Wegovy was used for 15 months with life-style support from a professional to follow a calorie reduced diet and to get more active, people lost on average 15% of their body weight.

This compared to people in the study who had the same lifestyle support but dummy (placebo) injections, who only lost 2.4% of their body weight on average. The study in the New England Journal of Medicine also found that taking the drug can lead to a smaller waistline and lower blood pressure.

Research published in the same journal in 2023 was used to support the MHRA's approval of Wegovy for lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke in people with heart disease and are overweight or obese. The trial included 17,640 people who

received either weekly Wegovy or dummy injections for up to 5 years.

The study also found that those taking Wegovy had

a 20% lower risk of death from heart and circulatory disease, heart attack or stroke, compared to those taking placebo. Just 6.5% of participants in the Wegovy group experienced a heart event versus 8% in the placebo group.

### **Do I still need to diet and exercise?**

Yes, it's important to also make changes to your diet to reduce the amount of calories you are eating and to take part in regular exercise. This way you will get the most out of taking this medicine and to help you avoid gaining weight when you stop taking it. Your specialist clinic should be able to support you with this.

### **Are there any side effects or long-term risks?**

As with all drugs, Wegovy can cause side effects. The most common are feeling or being sick or having diarrhoea. Rarer but more serious problems include gall bladder disease, inflammation of the pancreas and kidney issues. Treatment with Wegovy is limited to two years as the long-term risks are still being studied.

**For more information on this or any other health related condition chat to one of our trained team.**



Answers: Q1, It is one of the brand names for the medicine called semaglutide. Q2, To manage excess weight and obesity in some people. Q3, Yes, alongside diet and physical activity. Q4, It is only available through specialist weight management clinics. Q5, Through your GP. Q6, It comes as a pre-filled injection pen you inject weekly under your skin. Q7, A study found that people who used Wegovy for 15 months, with support, lost on average 15% of their body weight. Q8, Yes. Q9, The most common ones are feeling or being sick and diarrhoea. Q10, It acts on areas of the brain involved in regulating your appetite.