

# Tips for Success on GLP Medications

Taking GLP medications can help with weight loss, but a lot of your success depends on your own choices. Choices such as taking your medications as prescribed, eating well, and living a healthy lifestyle can all help you reach your goals. Here are some tips for success when you're taking GLP medications for weight loss.

## Be realistic about weight loss



When you're taking GLP medications to lose weight, you may expect to lose weight quickly, but many people have unrealistic expectations. Weight loss of ½-2 pounds weekly is a phenomenal rate of loss, and it can lead to dramatic improvements in health risks and how you feel within a few months.

Still, even this great rate may feel slow, since you may not notice changes on a daily basis. It's important to keep a long-term view and be realistic about weight loss. You may not lose weight every day or week, but you can hit your goals if you stick to the plan and stay positive.

Remember, getting to the maximum dose of your GLP is NOT the goal! It will not make you lose weight faster! GLPs are a tool for weight loss, not a cure! Slow and steady weight loss with long-term, sustained loss is the goal! Losing too much weight too fast almost never results in long-term success. If you feel that you are plateaued in your weight loss, you can split your weekly doses into 2 doses per week which may give you a more steady release of the medication, as well as reduced side effects. If you are not losing weight after being on the same dose for more than 2 months and modifying your injection schedule, we can discuss increasing your dose with the medical provider.

## Communicate with your healthcare team



Your healthcare team is there to keep you safe and help you reach your goals. Attend your regularly scheduled doctor and follow-up appointments and know when you should contact your provider for other concerns, such as serious side effects. Serious side effects can include allergic reactions such as swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat; sudden vision changes; severe and persistent abdominal pain; vomiting or diarrhea that does not resolve within 24 hours; and constipation without passing gas for more than 3 days. Serious side effects should be reported immediately to your doctor and your GLP provider.

***\*If you have any planned surgical procedures with anesthesia or moderate sedation, you must notify your surgeon and anesthesia providers that you are on a GLP and stop your injections a minimum of seven (7) days prior to surgery, unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon or anesthesiologist.***

## Take your other medications and GLP as prescribed



It is vital to report that you are taking GLPs to your primary physician and your pharmacist if you are taking medications for other medical conditions. This is to ensure that there are no interactions with other medications. Taking GLPs delays digestion which can affect the potency and effectiveness of oral medications and your primary doctor may need to make adjustments to your regimen. Do not stop medications without consulting your primary doctor.

For the best overall success, it's important to take your GLP medication exactly as your provider prescribes them. That includes taking them at the right time, taking the right dose, and not skipping doses. Choose your injection day(s) to best fit your schedule and lifestyle so that you remain consistent for the best levels of medication in your system. Also ***remember that your medication must stay refrigerated*** when planning vacations that include your injection day.

## Monitor side effects



Most people on GLP medications experience side effects at some point. Common side effects include gastrointestinal side effects, such as nausea, diarrhea, constipation, and bloating. Nausea should reduce over time as your body adjusts to the medication. Eating small, frequent meals and stopping eating when you're full can help manage nausea symptoms. Avoiding greasy, spicy, high fat and sugary foods is also important to minimize nausea. Ginger or peppermint tea, room temperature ginger ale, ginger chews and peppermints can help ease nausea. Staying hydrated and taking a daily stool softener or mild laxative can relieve constipation and bloating.

## Stay hydrated



Staying hydrated can help you lose more weight. It also helps increase energy and prevent dehydration headaches. For GLP medications, staying hydrated is extra important for reducing the risk of constipation and other side effects.

Water is the best choice for your overall health and wellbeing. If you don't like drinking plain water, adding lemon, lime, and/or orange slices or sugar-free water enhancers are good choices. Coffee and tea without cream or added sugars/syrups can also help keep you hydrated without adding many calories. Sugar-sweetened and high calorie beverages can interfere with weight loss or make you feel sicker while on GLP meds.

## Eat Well



Eating well on GLP medications can help you lose more weight and minimize side effects related to GLP meds. Eating slowly and keeping meals small can also help prevent overeating and reduce side effects. Meal prepping can be a useful tool in hitting nutritional goals and managing impulses to grab convenient, unhealthy options. These are some key diet considerations when buying groceries and planning your meals:

- Lean protein foods reduce hunger by keeping you fuller, longer, and provide protein to maintain muscle mass and metabolism. Higher muscle mass leads to maintaining weight loss goals longer. Options include fish, egg whites, beans, lentils, reduced-fat dairy, chicken breast, and lean ground turkey.
- Fiber can help prevent constipation. High-fiber foods are also filling and nutritious. Whole grains, vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds have fiber.
- Vegetables are low in calories and good for weight loss. Load up your plate with vegetables to satisfy hunger without many calories.
- Low-fat foods are lower in calories and less likely to cause side effects. Limit fast food, fried foods, fatty meats, and full-fat cheeses. Instead, focus on lower-fat options and grilling, baking, or steaming as cooking methods.

## Be physically active



Physical activity can improve physical and mental health, and support success on GLP medications. Joining a gym is an excellent way to get physically active, it is not necessary. Simply taking a daily walk, using free weights at home, or following along with your favorite tiktok instructor are great ways to include exercise into your routine. Consistency gives you more benefits and help you form habits to make exercise easier. These are some general tips:

- Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Do muscle-strengthening exercises a couple of times weekly for each major muscle group. Small amounts make a difference.
- Reduce long sitting periods. Walk around your home or workplace while on the phone, during breaks or during commercials when watching TV.
- Log your activity in a notebook or app such as My Fitness Pal to keep track and stay motivated.

## Log meals and snacks



Logging what you eat helps you stay aware and accountable to yourself of what you're eating and where you need to make improvements in your diet. People who log more tend to lose more weight. There are many free and low cost apps available such as Baritastic and My Fitness Pal. Keeping a simple food journal is effective as well.

## Get adequate sleep



Getting enough sleep supports health and weight loss. People who get enough sleep have improved blood sugar control, reduced levels of hunger hormones, and weaker cravings than people who are sleep-deprived. Set aside enough time for sleep, have a consistent bedtime routine, and aim for a sleep environment that's cool, dark, and quiet to get better sleep.

## Learn, adapt and celebrate successes



Everyone's body and journey are different. As an individual, your own responses and journey may not be the same as another person's. You may need to adjust your exercise or diet plans to hit your goals or to minimize side effects from your medications. It can be even more important to manage stress because taking GLP medications can cause additional stressors around taking medications, noticing changes in your body, having a different relationship with food, and more.

It's important to be aware, flexible, and patient with yourself.

Celebrating victories can help keep you positive and motivated. Some successes may come on the scale as you lose weight, but others will be non-scale victories like fitting into smaller clothes, improvements in medical conditions, or just feeling better about yourself. Notice these successes and celebrate them by acknowledging them or giving yourself a reward!