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For Naturopathic Medicine & Functional Nutrition

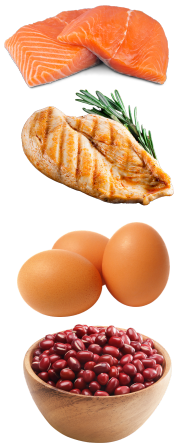
Optimal Nutrition While on a GLP-1 Medication for Weight Management

Nutrition is an important part of any weight loss journey, especially when using injectable medications such as Semaglutide or Tirzepatide (often referred to as GLP-1 medications)*. Balanced nutrition enhances the effectiveness of these medications by reducing hunger, stabilizing blood sugar, and preventing nutrient deficiencies. It also plays a key role in managing potential side effects, ensuring better overall outcomes.

**Brand names include Wegovy and Ozempic (injectable Semaglutide) and Zepbound and Mounjaro (injectable Tirzepatide). Other GLP-1 medications exist, but these are the most effective and popular for weight management.*

Protein

Protein helps your body build and repair muscles, keeps you feeling full, and supports your energy needs.



- Most people need around 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.
- For someone taking injectable Semaglutide or Tirzepatide medication, the protein needs are higher at 1.2- 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight (about 0.55–0.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight) per day.
- This increased protein intake helps prevent muscle loss and supports muscle maintenance during weight loss.
- Choose protein-rich foods like chicken, fish, eggs, and beans to meet your protein needs.

Fiber

Fiber enhances the feeling of fullness, helps with digestive regularity, and helps to prevent constipation, which is a common side effect of injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications.

- While the basic guidelines (25 grams for women, 38 grams for men) still apply, some practitioners may recommend slightly higher fiber intake to prevent side effects such as constipation and to support the feeling of fullness.
- Incorporate both soluble fiber and insoluble fiber into your meals and snacks.
- Soluble fiber like that found in oats, beans, lentils, and apples helps with blood sugar control and feeling full longer.
- Insoluble fiber like that found in whole grains, nuts, seeds, and brown rice supports digestive health and prevents constipation.



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Micronutrients

Injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications slow down how quickly food leaves your stomach, meaning that food stays in the stomach longer before moving into the intestines. While this is beneficial for feeling full longer and reducing calorie intake, it can also affect how the body absorbs certain essential micronutrients like calcium, iron, and vitamin D.

Connection to Long-Term Health Goals:

- **Bone Health**: Maintaining adequate levels of calcium and vitamin D helps support long-term bone health. This is especially important for those losing weight rapidly, as they may be at higher risk for losing bone mass.
- **Energy Levels**: Sufficient iron intake helps prevent fatigue and low energy, ensuring you can stay active, which is critical for sustaining weight loss and maintaining muscle mass.
- **Immune Function:** Vitamin D and iron both play roles in immune health, helping you avoid illness and stay consistent with your health goals.

Tips

- Include calcium-rich foods like dairy, leafy greens, and fortified alternatives in your meals and snacks to get enough calcium. →



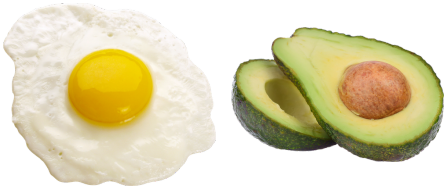
- Pair foods that have iron - like lentils, chickpeas, red meat, and spinach - with vitamin C-rich foods like oranges and bell peppers (vitamin C enhances iron absorption). →



- Avoid consuming iron-rich meals at the same time as calcium-rich meals or caffeine, tea, or coffee as these can interfere with iron absorption. →



- Eat vitamin D-rich foods like fatty fish and egg yolks alongside healthy fats like avocados or olive oil to aid absorption. →



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Hydration

Why Hydration Matters

- **Supports digestion**: Water helps food move through the digestive system and prevents constipation, which is important because injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications slow digestion.
- **Aids in nutrient absorption**: Water helps break down food, allowing your body to absorb essential nutrients like vitamins and minerals.
- **Maintains energy**: Staying hydrated helps keep your body energized throughout the day.

How Much Water Do You Need?

- Aim for 8 glasses (64 fl oz) of water per day, or more if you're active.
- Increase your water intake if you experience any side effects from injectable Semaglutide or Tirzepatide medications, like nausea or constipation.



A Note About Malnutrition

Injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications often reduce appetite, leading to lower food intake. This lower food intake can cause malnutrition, which happens when your body doesn't get enough nutrients like protein, vitamins, and minerals.

If your appetite is low, it's even more important to prioritize whole foods such as lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and dairy products (or dairy alternatives) to ensure you're getting enough protein, fiber, and micronutrients.

Disclaimer: The content provided in this handout only applies to FDA-approved injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications (Wegovy, Ozempic, Zepbound, and Mounjaro). It does not apply to other weight loss medications or compounded versions of Semaglutide or Tirzepatide. Consult with your physician for medication management.