Maintaining Muscle While On GLP-1 Medications

When taking injectable Semaglutide or Tirzepatide (sometimes referred to as GLP-1 medications)* for weight management, you may be at risk of losing muscle mass. You can minimize this risk by prioritizing protein and incorporating strength training.

**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.*

Risk of Losing Muscle Mass

Why Is There a Risk of Losing Muscle Mass When Taking a GLP-1 Medication?

- **Appetite suppression**: Injectable Semaglutide and Tirzepatide medications reduce hunger and increase fullness, leading to lower food intake.
- **Calorie deficit**: When you consume fewer calories, the body may break down muscle tissue for energy, particularly during rapid weight loss.
- **Reduced protein intake**: Due to reduced appetite, you might not be eating enough protein, which is essential for preserving muscle mass.

Key Strategies to Protect Muscle Mass:

- Ensure you're eating enough protein to support muscle repair and growth.
- Incorporate resistance exercises to keep muscles active and prevent muscle breakdown.



Importance of Protein

Why Does Protein Matter?

- **Builds and preserves muscle**: Essential for maintaining muscle mass, especially during weight loss with a Semaglutide or Tirzepatide injectable medication.
- **Increases fullness**: Keeps you feeling fuller for longer, helping to manage hunger.
- **Supports metabolism**: Protein boosts metabolism and aids in fat loss while protecting muscle.

Protein needs when on a Semaglutide or Tirzepatide injectable medication are higher than usual, at **1.2- 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight** (0.55- 0.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight) per day. This is 120–200 grams of protein per day for a 100-kilogram (approximately 220-pound) person.

Practical Tips:

- Choose protein-rich foods such as eggs, Greek yogurt, chicken, tofu, fish, lentils, and beans.
- Spread protein intake throughout the day and aim for 20-30 grams of protein per meal.
- If you're struggling to get enough protein with a reduced appetite, try incorporating protein shakes.

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Importance of Exercise

Why Regular Exercise Matters

- **Supports weight loss**: Exercise helps burn calories and keeps the metabolism active.
- **Preserves muscle mass**: Regular exercise, particularly resistance training, helps prevent muscle loss during weight loss.
- **Boosts overall health**: Exercise improves cardiovascular health, mood, and energy levels.

Types of Exercise to Include

- **Cardiovascular Exercise:** Helps with fat burning and overall fitness.
  - Examples: Walking, cycling, swimming, or jogging for 30-45 minutes, 3-5 times per week.



- **Resistance Training:** Builds and preserves muscle mass, which is crucial during weight loss. Involves using weights, bands, or your body weight to work muscles.
  - Examples: Bodyweight exercises, resistance bands, or weightlifting.



How Often Should You Do Resistance Training?

- **Frequency:** Aim for 2-3 times per week, with at least 48 hours between sessions for each muscle group to allow recovery.
- **Reps and Sets:** Start with 2-3 sets of 8-12 reps per exercise.
- **Progress gradually:** Increase resistance or weight as your muscles get stronger.

Before starting any exercise program, especially while on a Semaglutide or Tirzepatide injectable medication, consult with your healthcare provider to ensure it's safe for your health. For guidance on proper technique and safety, consider working with a certified personal trainer.

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.