

Urgent information for people taking a GLP-1 analogue for type 2 diabetes

(Dulaglutide, Exenatide, Semaglutide, Liraglutide, Lixisenatide)

A worldwide drug shortage

There is a worldwide shortage of GLP-1 analogues for type 2 diabetes. These include Dulaglutide (Trulicity®), Exenatide (Byetta® or Bydureon®), Semaglutide (Ozempic® or Rybelsus®), Liraglutide (Victoza®) and Lixisenatide (Lyxumia®).

Due to increased global use, manufacturers are currently unable to produce enough of these diabetic injectable medicines to meet demand. Supply is not expected to return to normal until at least the middle of 2024.

Below we have set out answers to some questions you may have:

What should I do with my diabetes medication?

You should continue taking all your diabetes medication as normal, including your GLP-1 analogue if you have supply.

Continue to adopt a healthy eating plan, with a reduction in portion size and good hydration with water, combined with regular activity such as a short 10 min walk after meals will all help keep your blood 'sugar/glucose' levels acceptable.

Will I need a review for my diabetes?

All patients using a GLP-1 analogue will need a review of their diabetes medication over the coming weeks. Most patients will need to change their diabetes treatment because of the shortage, but the timing of reviews will depend on how close you are to needing a new supply.

Can I buy medicine online?

GLP-1 RAs should only be obtained on prescription from registered pharmacies. It is illegal to obtain them without a prescription, and the medicine may not be genuine and could be a risk to your health.

What if I feel unwell?

If you feel unwell with symptoms of high blood glucose – such as feeling very thirsty, peeing a lot, feeling weak or tired, blurred vision or losing weight - please seek a GP appointment at the earliest opportunity.

Please call 111 for help if you think you have high blood glucose and; you're feeling sick, being sick or have stomach pain, you're breathing more quickly than usual or your heart is beating faster than usual, you feel drowsy or are struggling to stay awake, your breath has a fruity smell (like pear drop sweets), you feel confused or have difficulty concentrating, you have a high level of ketones in your blood or pee. These could be signs you are becoming very unwell.

Where can I get further information?

We do not have any further information about the shortage or return to stock dates. We are dealing with a high volume of calls, so please bear this in mind before considering contacting your GP or hospital diabetes team. But if your supply is running low, you will need to contact your practice in good time.