

Patient Information Leaflet: GLP-1 Injectable Treatments

You are receiving this leaflet because you have **type 2 diabetes**. Your healthcare team is discussing your treatment options, and you would likely benefit from a GLP-1 injectable treatment. These medications can help improve your diabetes management and reduce the long-term health risks associated with the condition.

This leaflet provides general information about GLP-1 injectable treatments like **Mounjaro** and **Ozempic**.

What are GLP-1 Injectable Treatments?

GLP-1 stands for "Glucagon-like peptide-1". GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs) are a class of medications that mimic a natural hormone in your body called GLP-1. This hormone is released by your gut after you eat.

These treatments work in several ways:

- **Helps manage blood sugar:** They encourage your body to produce more insulin when your blood sugar levels are high, and they reduce the amount of sugar produced by your liver.
- **Aids weight loss:** They can help you feel fuller for longer by slowing down how quickly food leaves your stomach. They also reduce your appetite and food cravings.
- **Potential cardiovascular benefits:** Some GLP-1 RAs have been shown to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, and death in people with type 2 diabetes and known heart disease.

Mounjaro (tirzepatide) is slightly different as it mimics both GLP-1 and another hormone called GIP (glucose-dependent insulintropic polypeptide), which also helps with appetite and blood sugar control.

Who are these treatments for?

This medication has been recommended to you for your

- **Type 2 diabetes:** To help manage blood sugar levels, often when other treatments like diet, exercise, and metformin (and others) are not enough. It may also support with weight loss
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How to Use Your Treatment

- **Dosage:** Your doctor will prescribe your starting dose. The dose is usually increased over time to help your body get used to the medication and minimise side effects. Do not change your dose unless your doctor or pharmacist tells you to.

- **Administration:** These medicines are given as a once-weekly injection under the skin (subcutaneously). The best places to inject are the stomach (abdomen), thigh, or upper arm. You should rotate your injection site each week. Your healthcare team will show you how to use the injection pen.
 - **Timing:** You can take your injection on the same day each week, at any time of day, with or without food.
 - **Storage:** Store your pen in the refrigerator (2°C to 8°C) in its original packaging to protect it from light. Do not freeze the pen.
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Common Side Effects

The most common side effects are related to the digestive system and are usually mild to moderate. They tend to be most noticeable when you first start treatment or when your dose is increased. They often get better over time.

Common side effects may include:

- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Stomach (abdominal) pain
- Reduced appetite

What to do if you have side effects:

- Eating smaller, low-fat meals more often can help.
 - Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, especially if you have vomiting or diarrhoea.
 - If side effects are persistent or difficult to manage, speak to your healthcare team. They may suggest a slower dose increase, an alternative medication, or a medicine to help with the symptoms.
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Important Safety Information

- **Pancreatitis:** In rare cases, GLP-1 treatments can cause inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis). If you experience severe, persistent stomach pain, especially if it goes to your back, contact your doctor immediately.
- **Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar):** If you are taking other diabetes medications that can lower blood sugar, such as insulin or sulphonylureas (e.g. Gliclazide), your dose may need to be adjusted to prevent low blood sugar episodes.
- **Pregnancy and Contraception:** These medications should not be used if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. If you are taking oral contraception (the pill),

Mounjaro (tirzepatide) may reduce its effectiveness, especially when you start treatment or increase your dose. You should use an extra barrier method of contraception, like condoms, for four weeks after starting the treatment and for four weeks after each dose increase. This does not apply to other forms of contraception like the coil, implant, or patch. Always discuss your contraception with your healthcare professional.

- **Sick Days:** If you are ill with an upset stomach, vomiting, or diarrhoea, it is important to stop your medication and drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Restart it once you are eating and drinking normally.

Nutrition and Exercise for GLP1 treatments

GLP-1 medications can lead to significant weight loss, which is a key goal for many people taking them. When you lose weight, you can lose a mix of fat and muscle. To help your body lose more fat and less muscle, it is important to focus on your nutrition and physical activity.

Protein Intake:

- **Why it's important:** Protein is essential for maintaining and building muscle mass. It also helps you feel full and satisfied, which can be beneficial when your appetite is reduced.
- **Aim for a protein-rich diet:** Include a good source of protein in every meal.
- **Good sources of protein include:**
 - Lean meats (chicken, turkey)
 - Fish (salmon, tuna)
 - Eggs
 - Dairy products (Greek yoghurt, cottage cheese)
 - Legumes (lentils, chickpeas, beans)
 - Tofu and other plant-based protein sources
- **How to incorporate it:** You can add a protein rich snack e.g. a handful of nuts to boost your intake throughout the day.

Physical Activity:

- **Why it's important:** Regular exercise is crucial for preserving muscle mass and improving your overall health. Combining aerobic exercise with strength training is a great strategy.
- **Weight-Bearing/Strength Training:**
 - These exercises use resistance to build muscle strength and mass.
 - Examples include:
 - Lifting weights (free weights or machines)

- Bodyweight exercises (push-ups, squats, lunges)
 - Resistance bands
 - Pilates or specific gym classes focused on strength
- Aim for at least two sessions per week, and remember to start with a weight or resistance level that is manageable for you and to slowly increase it over time.
- **Aerobic Exercise:**
 - Activities that get your heart rate up are great for burning calories and improving heart health.
 - Examples include:
 - Brisk walking
 - Cycling
 - Swimming
 - Jogging
 - Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week.

Always consult with your doctor or a registered dietitian before making significant changes to your diet or exercise routine. They can provide a personalised plan that is safe and effective for you.

Information and Support

- **Diabetes UK:** This charity provides a wealth of information about diabetes, including treatments and managing your health.
 - **Website:** <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/>
 - **Helpline:** 0345 123 2399 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)
 - GLP1 information: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/looking-after-diabetes/treatments/tablets-and-medication/glp-1>
- **Know Diabetes:** The local North West London Diabetes resource: <https://www.knowdiabetes.org.uk/>
- **Talk to Your Healthcare Team:** Your GP, diabetes specialist nurse, or pharmacist are your best resources for personalised advice and support.