

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro[®]) for Weight Management in adults Information for patients

Adapted with permission from a leaflet produced by Sheffield Diabetes Service, Sheffield Teaching Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

You have been prescribed a new medication for weight loss called tirzepatide, also known as Mounjaro®.

This works by activating natural substances in your body called glucagon-like-peptide-1 (GLP-1) and glucose-dependent-insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP).

It is given as a once-weekly injection and comes in a pen containing four doses.

This booklet provides you with information about:

- How your new medication works.
- How long you may be prescribed tirzepatide.
- How to keep you safe in the short and long term.
- How to reduce side effects.
- Dietary advice and tips.
- Activity advice and tips.
- Useful websites, apps and other leaflets.

You should also be provided with drug company information for tirzepatide, and a patient information leaflet.

Your new medication

What effect does tirzepatide have on the body?

- It slows down how quickly food leaves the stomach.
- It reduces how much food you eat.
- It can help you lose weight but **only when used alongside increased physical activity and dietary modifications**. There are more details on this in the section on wraparound support.
- It is helpful for managing blood glucose levels in people with Type 2 Diabetes as:
 - It releases insulin when it is needed.
 - It stops the liver making glucose when it is not needed.

How can tirzepatide help me?

When combined with a healthy diet and lifestyle, tirzepatide can help reduce body weight. It lowers blood glucose levels in people with diabetes.

The aim is for you to lose at least 5% of your body weight over 6 months on the maximum dose of tirzepatide that you can tolerate. This will be discussed and reviewed with you by your prescriber and tirzepatide will be stopped if you lose less than 5% of your body weight after 6 months on the highest tolerated dose. There may be other reasons to stop tirzepatide and these will be discussed with you at your first appointment.

Some people find they think about food less often and feel more in control of their eating whilst being on tirzepatide. This can be an important benefit of this treatment.

How long will I be prescribed tirzepatide?

NHS South Yorkshire will fund tirzepatide for weight loss for a maximum of two years unless you are on a waiting list for bariatric surgery. Tirzepatide will only be prescribed if you are also on a wraparound support programme. This is a nine-month programme that will support you to make sustainable changes to your diet and to the amount of movement that you do. Your G.P. will refer you to this before starting tirzepatide and **you will be prescribed tirzepatide after attending the first session**. They may be a waiting list to join the wraparound programme, but you will be contacted when you have been a place. Details of the programme can be found online at <https://healthieryou.reedwellbeing.com/about-the-programme/>

If you miss two sessions of the wraparound programme (in the absence of exceptional circumstances) the provider will notify your practice and tirzepatide will be stopped.

Steps to keeping safe on tirzepatide

When you are unwell

You should not take this medication during periods of illness, for example, an upset stomach, diarrhoea, or vomiting. Restart it once you are eating and drinking normally again.

You should stop the medication and speak to a doctor if you have severe stomach and back pain that does not go away. This may be a sign of pancreatitis.

Use effective contraception

The oral contraceptive pill can be less effective when on this medication so you will need other forms of contraception to avoid pregnancy. A non-oral contraceptive or a barrier method of contraception should be used for the first four weeks after starting tirzepatide and for four weeks after each dose change.

Tirzepatide should not be taken when trying for a baby or if you are pregnant as it may affect the development of the baby. You should stop tirzepatide at least one month (but preferably three months) before trying for a baby.

If you are a woman of childbearing age, please discuss your contraception choices with your prescriber.

For people with diabetes: Improve blood glucose levels safely

It is important to reduce your meal size to match your smaller appetite. This will lower blood glucose levels so other diabetes medications may need to be reviewed and changed. If you take gliclazide tablets or insulin for your diabetes, you are at risk of hypos (blood glucose levels of less than 4mmol/L). Please check your blood glucose regularly and if experiencing hypos, contact your diabetes team to have your medication doses reviewed.

Future health and wellbeing

For anyone losing weight over a prolonged period, it is important to make sure that your dietary intake is providing your body with everything it needs to stay well now and in the future.

It is therefore recommended that you:

1. Eat enough protein foods

Alongside doing strength exercises (see activity section), make sure you are eating enough protein foods to keep up your muscle strength.

To do this, include protein food with each meal and choose protein rich snacks. See our 'Boost Your Protein' and 'Low carb snacks' leaflets at (<https://www.sth.nhs.uk/patients-visitor-information/patient-information-leaflets/view-all-by-specialty/?id=1782>) for more advice.

2. Get your vitamins and minerals

You should get all the goodness you need from a healthy diet. However, if your appetite is very reduced over a prolonged period of time, consider taking a complete multivitamin and mineral supplement daily.

You can buy these at pharmacies and supermarkets.

Ways of reducing the side effects of tirzepatide are discussed over the next few pages.

Please speak to your prescriber if you are finding the side effects severe or difficult to manage, for example, you are unable to eat or are eating very little.

Side effects of tirzepatide

What side effects could I have?

The side effects are different for everyone, and some will ease off over time.

The most common side effects are feeling sick, being sick, diarrhoea, or constipation.

Some people have other symptoms, for example, stomachache, indigestion, burping and bloating.

Like all medications there is also the risk of more serious side effects.

This includes an inflamed pancreas (acute pancreatitis). This can cause severe stomach and back pain which doesn't go away. See a doctor or seek medical help immediately if you have these symptoms.

How can I reduce side effects?

This booklet includes lots of ideas to help reduce the side effects from the medication.

Side effects are made worse by eating more food than your body needs.

If your stomach has not had time to empty and you eat more food, you may feel unwell.

Until now, it may have been common for you not to notice signals from your body which tell you when have eaten enough.

This can make it hard to know what a suitable and satisfying amount of food is and make it easier to overeat.

For example, you may regularly eat large meals and have snacks between meals, even when you are not hungry. Or you may always clear your plate, no matter what the portion size is.

This medication will reduce your appetite and help you notice when you feel full. You may not be hungry at the times you used to be. Once you start eating, you will feel satisfied sooner and for longer.

Continuing with the same food habits you have had in the past and ignoring the body's signals will cause side effects.

Suggestions to reduce side effects

1. Eat in small portions.
2. Eat less fatty and spicy foods.
3. Keep hydrated.
4. Space out your food over the day.
5. Avoid lying down soon after eating.
6. Learn to eat to your appetite to avoid overeating.

Dietary advice for when taking tirzepatide

1. Eat in smaller portions

This medication can help you to recognise feelings of fullness again.

Begin to reduce your portions and learn what the right portion size is for you now.

This will help to get the most out of the medication.

The handy portion guide on page 10 shows you what to aim for. You may want to reduce your portions gradually.

Further tips for eating in smaller portions

- Buy less food when you go shopping.
- When cooking, prepare smaller portions.
- Swap to a smaller plate.
- Tune in to early signs of fullness during your meal. Stop when you start to feel comfortably satisfied.
- Do not feel bad about throwing food away. In time you will learn to serve yourself the portion size you need.
- Save spare portions and eat them at another meal.
- When eating out, share a main meal or choose smaller meals such as starters.
- When eating at other people's homes, tell them in advance that you only need a small portion.

2. Eat less fatty and spicy foods

Foods that are high in fat take longer to digest and stay in your stomach for longer. Eating fried or fatty foods can increase the side effects of tirzepatide.

Reducing the amount of fat in your diet will help and can also support weight loss. Use the portions sizes on page 10 as a guide.

Spicy foods may also cause side effects so find out what works for you.

Tips to reduce your fat intake:

- Avoid takeaway foods as these can be very high in fat.
- Eat less high fat snacks, for example, biscuits, crisps, cake, chocolate, desserts, pastries and nuts.
- Grill, steam, bake or microwave foods instead of frying.
- If you use oil in cooking, use a spoon to measure it out rather than pouring it straight into the pan. Keep to 1 teaspoon per person.
- Cut the visible fat off meats, remove the skin from chicken and turkey, and choose lean minced meat.
- Eat less cheese. Choose alternative sandwich fillings, less cheese-based hot meals and use less in cooking. When including cheese, aim for the portion size suggested on page 10.

3. Keep hydrated

Drink sugar free fluids regularly over the day. To reduce side effects avoid drinking quickly, drinking through a straw, and regularly drinking fizzy drinks.

4. Space food out over the day

Space your meals out over the day, around 4 to 5 hours apart. You are not likely to feel hungry between meals.

For people with diabetes - if you are on insulin or gliclazide tablets, you may sometimes need a small carbohydrate snack to avoid a low blood glucose, especially if you are more active than usual.

5. Avoid lying down soon after eating

It can be helpful to avoid eating too late or too close to bedtime. This allows for more time to digest your food.

6. Learn to eat to your appetite

When we eat, there is a delay between us having eaten enough and our brain receiving this message. This can take at least 20 minutes.

During these 20 minutes or more, you may think you are still hungry and continue eating. By the time your brain knows you are full, you may have eaten more than you need. This may increase side effects of nausea and discomfort but also makes it harder to lose weight. This section introduces you to tips to help you to tune in to your feelings of hunger and fullness.

a) Slow down your eating:

By eating more slowly, your brain has time to catch up with your stomach and this helps you to avoid overeating. Try these tips:

- Use a knife and fork where possible; you are much more likely to eat too quickly when using your hands. Cut food into smaller pieces and put your knife and fork down between mouthfuls.
- Sit down to eat whenever possible. Eating on the move makes it harder to concentrate on slowing down your eating.
- Focus on your eating rather than doing other things like watching TV, going on your phone etc. Eating at the table can help.
- Focus on tasting and enjoying every mouthful.
- Have a break midway through your meal for a few moments. If eating with others, have a conversation.

- At the end of a meal, you should feel comfortably satisfied, but it is normal to feel you could still eat some more. It is important to get used to this feeling and not to go back for seconds. You can always eat again in a few hours if you are still hungry later.

b) Get snacking under control:

Try to only eat when you are truly hungry. Most of the snacks we have are due to cravings or habits rather than physical hunger. Many people do not need to have snacks or supper. If you have diabetes, speak to your diabetes team if you are not sure.

Ask yourself:

“Am I physically hungry?”

You may have an empty feeling or a rumbling stomach if you are truly hungry. Physical hunger doesn't tend to go away when you are distracted. Does the timing of your hunger make sense? If it has been 4 hours since you last ate, it is more likely to be true hunger than if it is just after a meal.

“Could this be a craving?”

Cravings tend to be for specific foods we enjoy which are often high in sugar, salt and fat. Cravings may feel like physical hunger but there are clues that may help you to recognise that they are a craving. Cravings can happen at any time, even straight after a meal. They are often triggered by emotions, boredom or by simply seeing, smelling, or hearing about a food.

“Could this be a habit?”

Habits are not hunger or cravings. Habits tend to happen repeatedly and are triggered by time or routine. For example, eating supper every night even though you are not hungry; buying a chocolate bar each time you go to a petrol station; or having pudding after your main meal even though you are full.

c) Tips to beat cravings:

- Once you have recognised your cravings you can start to try and resist them. Most cravings last for 5-10 minutes and will go away, especially if you distract yourself by keeping busy.
- Recognise what triggers your cravings and try to address this. For example, if it is boredom, find activities to keep you busy such as walking, crafts, reading, puzzles, having a bath or shower. If it is low mood or anxiety, speak to your doctor or nurse about counselling available locally.
- Avoid temptation. Try to keep tempting food out of the house. Ask family members to support you in this if necessary.
- Try having a drink instead of eating. Choose non-fizzy and sugar free drinks.
- If you do decide to have a craved food, try to have the smallest portion that will

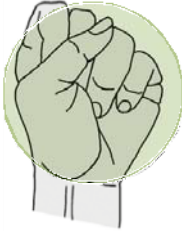
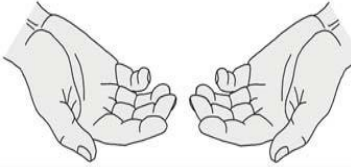
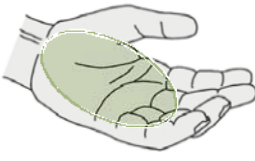
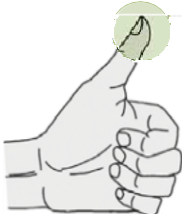
satisfy your craving. Take your time and savour the taste, try to make it last as long as you can.

d) Tips for changing habits:

- Sometimes we have had habits for a long time. Some people can change these straight away and for others this can take more time, effort, and support. Ask for help if you need it.
- Try to change the routine that leads to the habit. For example, paying for your petrol at the pump can help to avoid buying a snack, or keeping out of the kitchen in the evenings can help to avoid being tempted to snack.
- Start by reducing the portion size of foods you eat out of habit. For example, if you usually have 2 biscuits at bedtime, have 1 instead.

Handy portion guide

You can use your hand to estimate suitable portions. Use the following portion sizes as a guide to plan healthy balanced meals.

	<p>Starchy carbohydrates and fruit: Include a starchy carb with every meal and choose an amount the size of your fist.</p>
	<p>Vegetables: Choose as much as you can hold in both hands.</p>
	<p>Protein foods*: Always include some of these with every meal. Choose an amount up to the size of the palm of your hand.</p>
	<p>Fats: A portion of oil, spreads, mayonnaise etc., is around 1 teaspoon or an amount the size of the tip of your thumb.</p>

Handy measure for cheese - size of two fingers.

Keep active

Being physically active is important for your physical and mental wellbeing **and is necessary to lose weight safely with tirzepatide**. Most people can do some activity, but if you are unsure because of your health, ask your doctor for advice before you start.

Keeping your muscle strength

Activity will help to **keep your muscle strength**. This is essential for healthy ageing and managing your weight, both now and in the future.

Losing muscle strength makes everyday movement more difficult and can increase the risk of falls. It will also make weight gain more likely. Tirzepatide causes you to lose muscle as well as fat, but it is often fat which is re-gained once you stop taking the medicine.

Aim to do some strength activities at least twice a week which help to keep your muscles strong. These include things like tai chi, yoga, Pilates and similar classes, or strength training using gym equipment, free weights, resistance bands or your own body weight.

In addition, at least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity (see below) is recommended for general health. You can split this up over the week such as 30 minutes a day for 5 days. Moving around for 10 to 15 minutes after you have finished your meal can slow down the rise in your blood glucose level.

Other tips for being more physically active:

- Activities could include walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, housework, gardening and washing the car or windows.
- Build in activities after meals such as going for a walk or doing some housework.
- Be realistic with your goals. Try to think about what you can do rather than what you can't do. For example, if you can't walk far, can you stand more often? If you can't stand, can you do activities whilst sitting? This will help to build more movement into your day.
- Build up gradually. Over time aim to do activities at a moderate intensity. This should make you breathe faster and feel warmer, but you should still be able to have a conversation.
- If you are already active, try to challenge yourself with different activities or do things for longer or more intensely.
- Keep a record of your progress to see how far you have come. You could monitor your step count or use a fitness tracker. This can help you to stay motivated.

Keeping a track of your progress

It can help to keep a diary when you start to make changes. This is useful to share at your appointments.

You could record what you are eating, blood glucose levels (if relevant) etc. or note down if you ate out of habit or cravings - you may spot triggers for your cravings

It is helpful to review your diary and see where you have made changes that have helped to reduce your blood glucose levels or where you might want to make further changes.

Useful websites and apps

www.healthyliving.nhs.uk Healthy Living is a free, online NHS programme that supports people to live well with type 2 diabetes.

www.nhs.uk/live-well Advice on eating well and exercising alongside other lifestyle tips.

www.diabetes.org.uk Information covering all aspects of diabetes as well as recipes and the latest diabetes research. Search for 'your feelings about food' and 'food psychology' for information on emotional eating.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/> Gives some ideas for strength building exercises.

Apps to log the food you eat to help you keep track or find out more about what is in foods. 'Carbs & Cals', 'MyFitnessPal' and 'Nutracheck' are examples. Find one that suits you.

Leaflets

Diabetes UK '5 ways to move more' free leaflets

- **shop.diabetes.org.uk/products/five-ways-to-move-more**

These are one-page leaflets of exercises including moving more when sitting, standing, or marching on the spot and stretching.

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/ Strength exercise ideas from NHS.

Exercise Videos

Go to the Diabetes UK channel on YouTube to find these videos:

www.youtube.com/@diabetesuk

- Five ways to move your arms (a 3-minute routine)
- Five ways to move while sitting (a 3-minute routine)
- Five ways to move your legs (a 3-minute routine)

Other Leaflets

You may find the following leaflets by Sheffield Teaching Hospitals helpful:

- Carbohydrates and Diabetes
- Carb Smart for Type 2 Diabetes
- Healthy Eating for weight and diabetes
- Low carb snacks
- Boost your protein foods
- Boost your fibre foods

You can find these at www.sth.nhs.uk > Patient & visitors> Patient information leaflet