

Discuss medications with your doctor. Current medications may be adjusted to minimize weight gain. Consider adding weight loss medications to lifestyle changes.

Could medicines I already take be causing my weight gain?

Some medicines you already take for other conditions may cause you to gain weight. For example, certain antidepressants and other psychiatric medicines can cause weight gain.

Other examples include:

- Certain medicines for heart conditions
- Contraceptives
- Steroids
- Some diabetes treatments

In most cases, your doctor may be able to offer an alternative medicine to treat your condition that does not cause as much weight gain. Review the list of current medicines you take with your doctor.



"I feel better and was able to lose 10 pounds after my doctor adjusted my medications."

Do I need these medicines?

Medicine to treat obesity is usually prescribed if:

- You have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 kg/m² or greater, or
- You have a BMI of 27 kg/m² or greater with underlying health conditions, like diabetes, hypertension, or sleep apnea.

Anti-obesity medicines should not be used in women who are pregnant or wish to become pregnant.

How does anti-obesity medicine work to help me lose weight?

Medicine to treat obesity should be considered when you have not been able to meet your weight loss goals with lifestyle changes alone. These medicines work by affecting how fat is absorbed by the body, or by suppressing appetite, increasing your sense of fullness after eating, and keeping you fuller longer.



What can I expect when I start taking these medicines?

Medicine should be used in addition to healthy lifestyle changes, including increased activity and a reduced-calorie diet. In general, if you take anti-obesity medicine, you can expect to lose about 5% to 10% of your total body weight. For example, someone who weighs 200 pounds could expect to lose 10 to 20 pounds. These medicines are intended to be used long term. You will likely regain weight if you stop taking them.



What are the different kinds of obesity medicines?

Five prescription medicines currently exist to treat obesity. When deciding with your doctor which one is best for you, you should take into account the following:

- Any underlying conditions or other factors that would not make you a good candidate for a certain medicine
- Targets you hope to meet by taking medicine, like reducing cravings or eating smaller portions
- Cost and insurance considerations
- Preference for medicine taken by mouth vs. by shot
- Preference for medicine you take once daily vs. before each meal

What are the side effects?

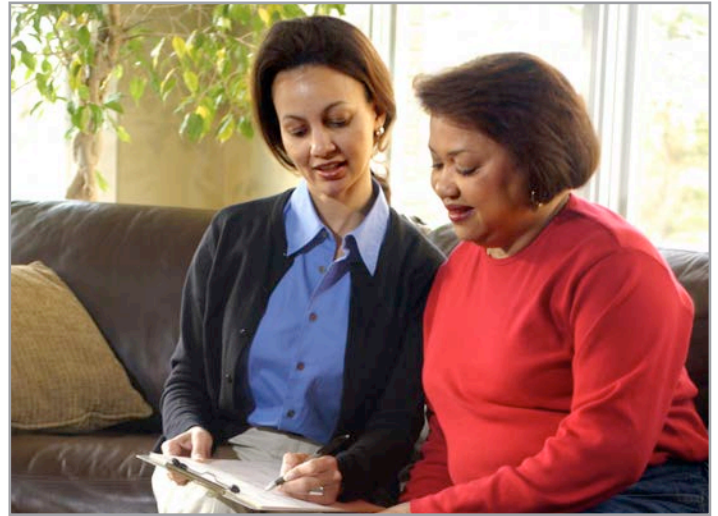
Side effects depend on the specific medicine and can range from:

- Stomach upsets, like diarrhea or gas
- Irregular heartbeat
- Constipation
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness
- Insomnia

What else should I know?

- It might take a while to find the right medicine for you. Sometimes, you will need to try more than one kind.
- Make sure you are receiving nutritional counseling from a registered dietician and counseling to deal with any emotional eating issues.

- Taking anti-obesity medicine is not “taking the easy way out.” Medication may help jump start your weight loss journey. Then you can build on your success with sustainable lifestyle changes!



Questions for my doctor:

- Could medicines I already take be contributing to my weight gain?
- Should I take medicine to treat my obesity?
- Which medicine is right for me?
- What are the side effects?
- Will insurance cover the medicine?
- What is the estimated monthly cost of this medicine?
- What other things should I be doing to ensure weight loss?
- Do I need to have regular follow-up visits?

Notes:

For more information, visit:

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases:

www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/prescription-medications-treat-overweight-obesity