

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

### Could medications I already take be causing my weight gain?

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

Other examples include:

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

In most cases, your doctor may be able to offer an alternative medication to treat your condition that does not cause as much weight gain. Review the list of current medications 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 medications?

Medication to treat obesity is usually prescribed if:

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

Antiobesity medication should not be used in women who are pregnant or wish to become pregnant.

### How does antiobesity medication work to help me lose weight?

Medication to treat obesity should be considered when you have not been able to meet your weight-loss goals with lifestyle changes alone. These medications 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 medications?

Medication should be used in addition to healthy lifestyle changes, including increased activity and a reduced-calorie diet. In general, if you take antiobesity medication, 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 medications are intended to be used long term. You will likely regain weight if you stop taking them.



## What are the different kinds of obesity medications?

Many prescription medications 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 medication
- Targets you hope to meet by taking medication, like reducing cravings or eating smaller portions
- Cost and insurance considerations
- Preference for medication taken by mouth vs. by injection
- Preference for medication you take once daily vs. before each meal

## What are the adverse effects?

Adverse effects depend on the specific medication and can include:

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

## Notes:

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**For more information, visit the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases:**  
[www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/prescription-medications-treat-overweight-obesity](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/prescription-medications-treat-overweight-obesity)