

Healthy Living Newsletter

A MedWatch publication to keep you healthy and informed.

Staying Healthy in Summer



What YOU Can Do to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Have you heard from your doctor that you have a high chance of developing type 2 diabetes? You might be overweight or have a parent, sister or brother with the disease. Maybe you had gestational diabetes, which is diabetes that develops during pregnancy. These are just a few examples of factors that can raise your chances of developing type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes can cause serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and even eye and feet problems. Prediabetes also can cause health problems. The good news is that **type 2 diabetes can be delayed and even prevented**. The longer you have diabetes, the more likely you are to develop health problems, so delaying diabetes by even a few years will benefit your long-term health.

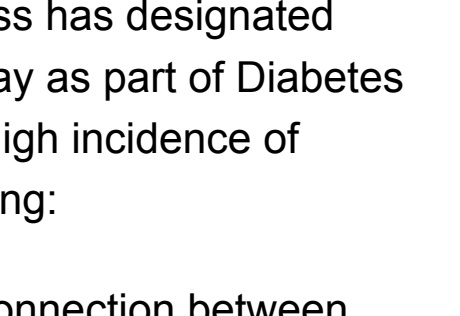
Most often, your best chance for preventing type 2 diabetes is to make lifestyle changes that work for you in the long term. Generally, this involves losing a modest amount of weight by following a reduced calorie eating plan and being physically active most days of the week.

Here are some additional strategies for managing your risk of diabetes:

- 1. Check your risk.** Take the Life! assessment test and learn more about your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Information on this test can be found at www.diabetes.org.
- 2. Manage your weight.** Excess body fat, particularly if stored around the abdomen, can increase the body's resistance to the hormone insulin and lead to type 2 diabetes.
- 3. Exercise regularly.** Moderate physical activity on most days of the week helps manage weight, reduce blood glucose levels and may also improve blood pressure and cholesterol.
- 4. Limit takeout and processed foods.** 'Convenience meals' are usually high in salt and fat. It's best to cook for yourself using fresh ingredients whenever possible.
- 5. Limit your alcohol intake.** Too much alcohol can lead to weight gain and may increase your blood pressure and triglyceride levels.
- 6. Don't smoke.** Smokers are twice as likely to develop diabetes as non-smokers.
- 7. Control your blood pressure.** Most people can do this with regular exercise, a balanced diet and by keeping a healthy weight. In some cases, you might need medication prescribed by your doctor.
- 8. See your doctor for regular check-ups.** As you get older, it's a good idea to regularly check your blood glucose, blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.

For more information on diabetes prevention, consult your doctor or contact your Pathways Concierge team at the number listed on your health plan ID card.

The Diabetes Heart Connection: What We ALL Should Know



Chances are that if you do not have type 2 diabetes yourself, you have a friend or loved one who does. According to the CDC, over 30 million Americans have diabetes and another 84 million have prediabetes, a condition that, if not treated, often leads to type 2 diabetes within 5 years. Even more concerning is that more than half of those with diabetes have no idea that they are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease. **Simply stated, adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die from heart disease than adults without diabetes.**

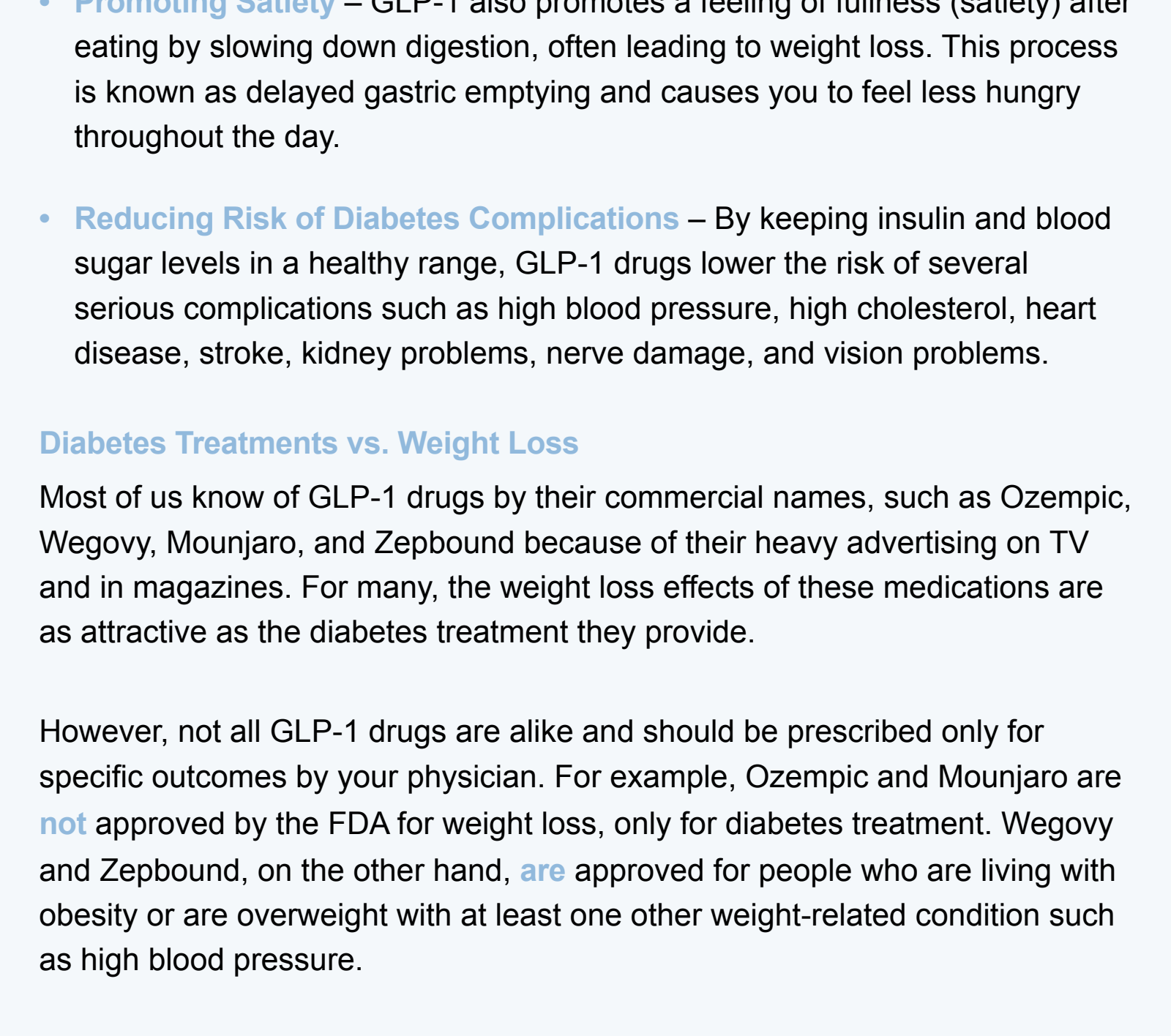
This direct link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD) represents a serious health epidemic in our country. An unacceptably high percentage of our population is destined for a future spent in emergency rooms and hospital beds. The cost in terms of human suffering is incalculable. The financial expense of diabetes is estimated to reach \$245 billion per year in medical costs and lost work and wages.

Fortunately, a national movement - **The Diabetes Heart Connection** – is striving to raise awareness of the increasing connection of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular issues. To promote this effort, Congress has designated November 9 as Diabetes Heart Connection Awareness Day as part of Diabetes Awareness Month. The movement strives to combat the high incidence of diabetes-heart disorders through a variety of efforts including:

- Promoting policies and programs that emphasize the connection between diabetes and CVD with an increased focus on prevention and greater overall wellness.
- Prioritizing care coordination for healthcare providers who treat patients with multiple chronic conditions.
- Increasing awareness among people at risk, providers, caregivers, policymakers and other stakeholders, on the significant impact of type 2 diabetes and CVD.
- Earlier detection through better understanding of the signs and symptoms of diabetes.

There is a tremendous amount of information and ideas available on how YOU can help yourself or a loved one reduce the likelihood of suffering from diabetes and CVD. For example, the American Heart Association's "Know Diabetes by Heart" initiative provides a monthly newsletter offering science-backed tips, resources for living with type 2 diabetes as well as recipes and meal planning solutions. See www.heart.org for how to enroll.

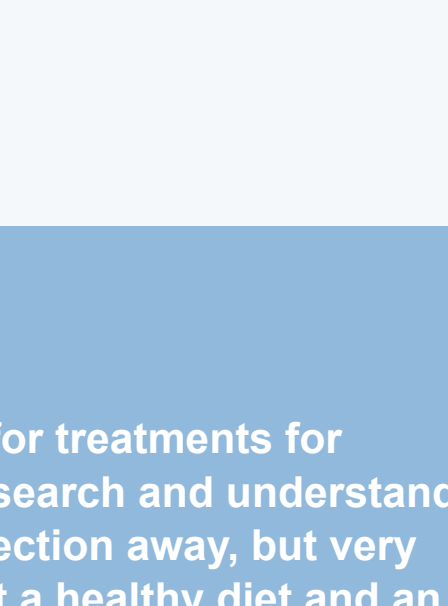
Source: heart.org



GLP-1 Medications – What You Won't See on TV

We've all seen those commercials and print ads touting the virtues of a class of medications designed to combat type 2 diabetes **and** help you lose weight in the process. They have catchy brand names, jingles and celebrities encouraging you to ask your doctor about them. While many of these medications can be quite effective, it is important for users to understand the differences between these medications and what questions to ask so that they can make an informed decision.

Today there are about 60 different type 2 diabetes medications to choose from, and researchers are studying roughly 100 more in clinical trials. What's more, many are innovating new ways to treat the condition while also providing heart, kidney, and body weight-related benefits. Here's some useful information about this fast-growing class of diabetes medications known as GLP-1's:



What Are GLP-1 Medications?

Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) is a class of medication that helps manage blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes. Some are also effective in combating obesity through weight loss. While these medications are relatively new, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first GLP-1 medication in 2005. Researchers are still learning about their other potential uses and benefits.

How Do GLP-1 Drugs Work?

Most people who take GLP-1 medications live with type 2 diabetes. Insulin is responsible for removing sugar from the blood and moving it into your body tissues that use it for energy. People with type 2 diabetes can't use insulin properly, which results in high blood sugar levels. However, GLP-1 drugs can help this condition in several ways:

- Lowering Blood Sugar** – GLP-1 drugs work by regulating insulin production and lowering blood sugar—which helps manage diabetes.
- Promoting Satiety** – GLP-1 also promotes a feeling of fullness (satiety) after eating by slowing down digestion, often leading to weight loss. This process is known as delayed gastric emptying and causes you to feel less hungry throughout the day.
- Reducing Risk of Diabetes Complications** – By keeping insulin and blood sugar levels in a healthy range, GLP-1 drugs lower the risk of several serious complications such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, kidney problems, nerve damage, and vision problems.

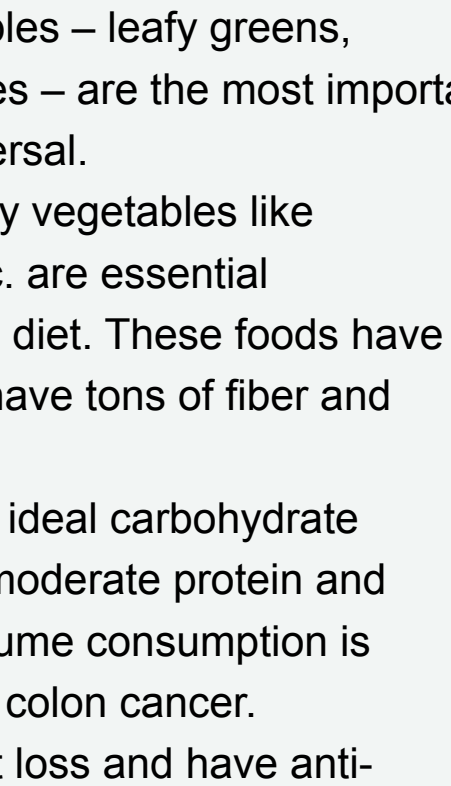
Diabetes Treatments vs. Weight Loss

Most of us know of GLP-1 drugs by their commercial names, such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, and Zepbound because of their heavy advertising on TV and in magazines. For many, the weight loss effects of these medications are as attractive as the diabetes treatment they provide.

However, not all GLP-1 drugs are alike and should be prescribed only for specific outcomes by your physician. For example, Ozempic and Mounjaro are **not** approved by the FDA for weight loss, only for diabetes treatment. Wegovy and Zepbound, on the other hand, **are** approved for people who are living with obesity or are overweight with at least one other weight-related condition such as high blood pressure.

Other Considerations Regarding GLP-1 Medications

- While these medications can be highly effective in both helping control blood sugar for diabetic patients and weight reduction for overweight or obese patients, they are not without side effects. The potential side effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal pain and diarrhea.
- These medications also come at a significant cost (with the average being \$1,200 to \$1,400 per month) and have experienced recent drug shortages, making access difficult at times.
- It is important to remember that these medications as a class are relatively new, and we still do not know the long-term effects, good or bad.



For those seeking a GLP-1 it is important to understand that these **medications alone cannot treat type 2 diabetes or obesity on their own.**

These drugs are not a cure-all but require other treatment strategies, like lifestyle and dietary changes, to be effective.

Bottom Line

It pays to be a curious consumer when looking for treatments for diabetes and obesity. Ask questions, do your research and understand that achievement of your goals is not just an injection away, but very much dependent upon your willingness to adopt a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.

If you have questions about GLP-1 medications, consult your doctor or contact your Pathways Concierge team at the number listed on your health plan ID card.

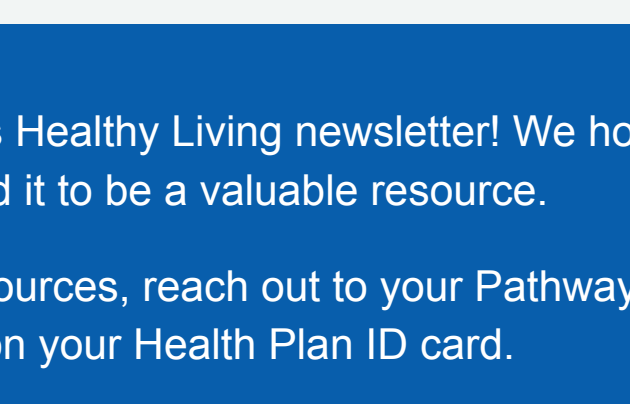


Did You Know? Interesting Facts about Diabetes

- The word "diabetes" is Greek for "siphon," which refers to the copious urine of uncontrolled diabetes.
- Type 1 diabetes is characterized by a lack of insulin. Type 2 diabetes is much more common and accounts for around 90% of all diabetes worldwide.
- Type 2 diabetes often does not have any symptoms. About 1/3 of all people with diabetes do not know they have the disease.
- People with diabetes are 2x as likely to develop heart disease as someone without diabetes.
- Individuals with an "apple" body shape are at greater risk for diabetes than are those with "pear" body shapes.
- Experts report that diabetes decreases life expectancy by five to 10 years.
- Clinical research found that babies who breastfeed at least three months had a lower incidence of type 1 diabetes and may be less likely to become obese as adults.
- Overweight individuals are more prone to develop diabetes because more fat requires more insulin.
- Smoking can increase diabetes risk by constricting blood vessels, raising blood pressure, and stimulating the release of hormones which promote insulin resistance.
- Diabetes is responsible for over one million amputations each year, a large percentage of cataracts, and at least 5% of blindness worldwide.
- Good control of diabetes significantly reduces the risk of developing complications and prevents complications from getting worse.
- Diabetes can be prevented. 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days and a healthy diet can drastically reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Nutrition Corner

5 Best Foods to Reverse or Prevent Diabetes (and 5 Foods to Avoid!)



THE 5 Best Foods for Combatting Diabetes

- 1. Green Vegetables.** Nutrient-dense green vegetables – leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, and other green vegetables – are the most important foods to focus on for diabetes prevention and reversal.
- 2. Non-Starchy Vegetables.** Non-green, non-starchy vegetables like mushrooms, onions, garlic, eggplant, peppers, etc. are essential components of a diabetes prevention (or reversal) diet. These foods have almost nonexistent effects on blood glucose and have tons of fiber and phytochemicals.
- 3. Beans.** Lentils, beans, and other legumes are the ideal carbohydrate source. They're low in glycemic load due to their moderate protein and abundant fiber and resistant starch. Bean and legume consumption is associated with reduced risk of both diabetes and colon cancer.
- 4. Nuts and Seeds.** Nuts and seeds promote weight loss and have anti-inflammatory effects that may prevent the development of insulin resistance.
- 5. Fresh Fruit.** Rich in fiber and antioxidants, fruits are a nutrient-dense choice for satisfying sweet cravings. Eating three servings of fresh fruit each day is associated with an 18% decrease in risk of diabetes.

AVOID the 5 Worst Foods for Diabetics and for Preventing Diabetes

- 1. Added Sugars.** Diabetes is characterized by abnormally elevated blood glucose levels. Avoid foods that cause dangerously high spikes in blood glucose.
- 2. Refined Grains.** Carbohydrates like white rice, white pasta, and white bread are missing the fiber from the original grain, so they raise blood glucose higher and faster than their intact, unprocessed (whole) counterparts.
- 3. Fried Foods.** Potato chips, french fries, doughnuts, and other fried starches start with a high-glycemic food index, and then pile on a huge number of low-nutrient calories in the form of oil.
- 4. Trans Fats.** In addition to their cardiovascular effects, saturated and trans fats (margarine, shortening, fast food, processed baked goods) reduce insulin sensitivity, leading to elevated glucose and insulin levels, and greater risk of diabetes.
- 5. Red and Processed Meats.** Higher intake of red meat and poultry is associated with significantly increased risk of developing diabetes, which is partially attributed to their higher content of iron in these meats.

Thank you for subscribing to MedWatch's Healthy Living newsletter! We hope you enjoyed the content and found it to be a valuable resource.

For more information and additional resources, reach out to your Pathways Concierge team at the number on your Health Plan ID card.