



# Weight Loss Medications

WEIGHT LOSS  
MEDICATIONS

**Side effects:** Dry mouth, headaches, insomnia, restlessness, nervousness, agitation, fast heartbeat, high blood pressure, and, rarely, psychosis and hallucinations.

► **lorcaserin (Belviiq):** It works by selectively targeting hunger receptors in your brain that researchers believe help you feel more full, and therefore help you eat less.

► **phentermine/topiramate ER (Qsymia):** Topiramate is an anticonvulsant drug, which means it belongs to a class of drugs that help treat seizures.

**Side effects:** The most common side effects are tingling hands and feet, dizziness, altered sense of taste, insomnia, constipation, and dry mouth.

► **Naltrexone/bupropion HCL (Contrave):** Both of these medicines work together to lower your appetite and control some cravings.

**Side effects:** The most common side effects include nausea, constipation, headache, vomiting, dizziness, insomnia, and dry mouth.

► **Liraglutide (Saxenda):** It is an injection that helps people lose weight by lowering appetite and controlling food cravings.

**Side effects:** Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation. Liraglutide can also increase your risk of developing gallstones or gallbladder inflammation.

► **Orlistat:** Orlistat (brand names Xenical and Orlistat) is a medicine that is effective in assisting and maintaining weight loss. It is available from pharmacists without a prescription.



**Side effects:** An oily rectal leakage and oily, fatty bowel motions. When taken long term, there is a risk of becoming deficient in fat-soluble vitamins.

Weight loss medicines that are no longer available:

- **Sibutramine:** Sibutramine is a serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor, which works by affecting brain chemistry.
  - **Fenfluramine:** Medicines containing Fenfluramine were withdrawn from the market in 1997 because of concerns that they caused heart valve damage.
- **Diethylpropion hydrochloride:** Brand named Tenuate or Tenuate Dospan, is another prescription medicine that was previously used in conjunction with calorie restriction, on a short-term basis only, in obese people. It has been withdrawn from the market.



## ▶ **Weight Loss Medications** ◀

**Weight Loss Medications Mechanism:**  
Prescription medications to treat overweight and obesity work in different ways. For example, some medications may help you feel less hungry or full sooner. Other medications may make it harder for your body to absorb fat from the foods you eat.

Weight loss medicines must be used together with diet and exercise to help you lose weight and get healthy. So while they are not a quick-fix, they can help you achieve weight loss when other methods have failed.

Who might benefit from weight-loss medications?

Weight-loss medications are meant to help people who may have health problems related to overweight or obese.

- Before prescribing a weight-loss medication, your doctor also will consider:
- ▶ The likely benefits of weight loss
  - ▶ The medication's possible side effects
  - ▶ Your current health issues and other medications
  - ▶ Your family's medical history
  - ▶ Cost



Health care professionals often use BMI to help decide who might benefit from weight-loss medications.

Your doctor may prescribe a medication to treat your overweight or obesity if you are an adult with:

- ▶ A BMI of 30 or more
- ▶ A BMI of 27 or more and you have weight-related health problems, such as high blood pressure or type 2 diabetes.

### **Weight Loss Medications:**

FDA-approved weight loss medications include the following:

- ▶ **Phentermine (Adipex, Lomaira):** It's a stimulant that has similar effects to amphetamines. It's an appetite suppressant.