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# Healthy Insights

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## Weight Loss

Two in five U.S. adults struggle with obesity according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For those with obesity or who are overweight, long-term weight loss can be hard to achieve. While medications may be helpful in some cases, there are other ways to achieve weight loss without medication.

### Are You at a Healthy Weight?

Obesity is measured by body mass index or BMI, a measure of body fat based on weight and height. You can calculate your BMI by entering your height and weight into the tool found here (<https://bit.ly/4f3FB74>). People with a BMI of 27 or above are considered overweight while those with a BMI of 30 or above are considered obese. Overweight and obesity increase the risk for many serious diseases and health conditions including:

- High blood pressure and cholesterol, which are risk factors for heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Breathing problems (asthma and sleep apnea)
- Joint problems (osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal discomfort)
- Gallstones and gallbladder disease
- Stroke
- Different types of cancer
- Premature death



### How to Lose Weight

Weight loss comes down to two lifestyle changes: eating a balanced diet and increasing your physical activity. To help ensure long-term success, set achievable and realistic goals, such as taking three 15-minute walks every week or adding one vegetable to your dinner every day. Another important step is to stop eating once you feel full. Be sure you stay hydrated with water and avoid drinks that are high in sugar content. Consider keeping a food diary where you write down everything you eat. If there is a break in your healthy habits, return to them as soon as you are aware.



## Is a Weight Management Medication Right for You?

Your doctor may prescribe a weight management medication if you have obesity or are overweight with additional health problems like high blood pressure or type 2 diabetes. Different weight management medications work in different ways. Some may make you feel less hungry or full sooner. Others make it harder for your body to absorb fat from the foods you eat. Studies show that these medications work best when combined with a healthy lifestyle, so you will have to stay active and keep eating healthy and nutritious foods even while on the medication. Keep in mind that these medications can have side effects and may not be recommended for everyone with a high BMI. Some people with overweight or obesity can lose weight with a lifestyle program alone. Be sure to talk with your doctor about the best plan for you.

## Which Weight Management Medications are Available?

There are a few prescription medications that are approved to treat overweight and obesity. These include orlistat (Xenical), phentermine-topiramate (Qsymia), naltrexone-bupropion (Contrave), liraglutide (Saxenda), semaglutide (Wegovy and Ozempic), setmelanotide (IMCIVREE), and tirzepatide (Zepbound). Not all insurance plans cover these medications, so be sure to contact your insurance provider. Lastly, always talk with your doctor before starting any of them. To avoid counterfeit drugs, only use weight loss medication that is prescribed by your doctor.



## Sources

**Overweight and Obesity Symptoms and Diagnosis | NIH | <https://bit.ly/4dLekW9>**

**Overweight and Obesity | CDC | <https://bit.ly/3BMwwkZ>**

**Maintaining a Healthy Weight | NIH | <https://bit.ly/40f7Ew2>**

**Prescription Medications to Treat Overweight & Obesity | NIH | <https://bit.ly/4hksW1l>**

**Drugs and Supplements | Mayo Clinic | <https://bit.ly/40aawus>**

**FDA's Concerns with Unapproved GLP-1 Drugs Used for Weight Loss | FDA | <https://bit.ly/489jVnl>**

*IPRO Healthy Insights* comes from Dr. Clare Bradley, IPRO's Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, a nationally recognized public health advocate.

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