

Starting Ozempic

What do I need to know?

Starting Dose

Your doctor will prescribe this medicine as follows:

- 0.25mg, once a week for 4 weeks, then 0.50mg, once a week for 4 weeks
- You may or may not increase to 1.0mg, once a week afterwards

Possible Side Effects

This medication can cause side effects, especially intestinal ones such as nausea, constipation and diarrhea. These side effects are more likely to happen when:

- you are starting the medicine
- you are increasing the dose
- you are trying to eat the same amount of food as you did before

If you have side effects after 4 weeks on the same dose, do not go to the higher dose. Speak to your doctor or diabetes educator about what to do next.

What to expect when taking this medication

This medication changes how your body responds to food:

- You will fill up faster during mealtimes and stay feeling full longer.
- You may not be able to eat the same amounts of food that you did before. Trying to eat the same amounts of food can make you feel nauseated.
- If you feel nauseated, choose to eat smaller meals. You can also try eating bland foods like crackers and soup, sipping on liquids instead of a meal, and avoiding fatty foods.

It is very important that you keep up your energy and strength when taking this medication. It is important to eat as healthy as you can and also eat less, even when you don't feel like eating

because food is the fuel to give you energy to be well and enjoy life.

A Registered Dietitian can help you plan to eat healthy and also lose weight.

Strength training can keep your muscles strong and energized and help you maintain strength for activities you do every day for a healthy lifestyle.

If you have any side effects or concerns, try the approaches listed below.

| Challenge | Approaches to Try |
|--|--|
| Nausea | Avoid fatty meals. Eat small meals Drink liquid meal replacements and less solid food at a meal Crackers, bread, ginger gingerale, sipping liquids like soup, tea |
| Possible food triggers of nausea | Fatty foods, caffeine Overeating or eating the same size portions as you did before Eating your food quickly |
| Constipation | Eat more fruits and vegetables Drink more water (aim for 3 litres a day) Consider constipation treatment-talk to a dietitian or pharmacist |
| Extreme fullness/undereating due to low appetite | Choose liquid meal replacements - sip on a high protein drinks Limit your fat intake - eat fatty foods last Work with your health team on a plan for meeting your protein and energy needs, to minimize side effects. We can try lowering the Ozempic dose down for a period of time, that may help lower symptoms. |
| “I’m not losing weight anymore” “The meds aren’t working anymore” | Talk to your diabetes educator or doctor about your concerns. If the medication doesn’t seem to be working like it used to, there are options. Do not stop the medicine without talking to your health professional. If you stop this medicine and want to restart using it, you must restart it at the lowest dose! |
| Concerns that this is harming your appetite, your physical health or mental health | Do you make yourself vomit (sick) because you feel uncomfortably full? Do you worry that you have lost control over how much you eat? Do you believe you are fat when others say you are too thin? Would you say that food dominates your life? If you answer yes to any of the above, speak to a health professional before stopping this medication! |
| Discontinuation of Ozempic before surgery | This medication can be stopped the week before surgery, especially if you have GI symptoms. Resume medication as usual after surgery in most cases as directed in care plan. |