



Weight Loss Medication Options

Medication generic/ Brand	Typical insurance coverage indications	Approved ages	How it's taken	Common side effects	Average Weight Loss & Response
Semaglutide — Wegovy®	Adults: BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with a weight-related condition (e.g., hypertension, T2D, dyslipidemia). Adolescents: obesity (≥ 95 th BMI%).	12+	Weekly injection (pen).	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea/constipation, stomach pain, headache, gallbladder issues. <i>Avoid Pregnancy.</i>	~15% average loss at 68 weeks; ~70–80% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Tirzepatide — Zepbound®	Adults: BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with a weight-related condition (e.g., hypertension, T2D, OSA, CVD).	18+	Weekly injection (pen).	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea/constipation, decreased appetite.	15–20% average loss at 72 weeks; ~85% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Liraglutide — Saxenda®	Adults: BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with weight-related condition. Adolescents: obesity ≥ 95 th BMI%.	12+	Daily injection (pen).	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea/constipation, stomach pain. <i>Avoid Pregnancy.</i>	~8% average loss at 56 weeks; ~60% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Phentermine/topiramate ER — Qsymia®	Adults: BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with weight-related condition. Adolescents: obesity (≥ 95 th BMI %).	12+	Daily pill (extended-release).	Tingling in hands/feet, dizziness, altered taste, dry mouth, constipation, trouble sleeping. <i>Avoid Pregnancy.</i>	9–10% average loss at 1 year; ~70% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Naltrexone/bupropion ER — Contrave®	Adults: Typically, BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with a weight-related condition.	18+	Twice-daily pill (extended-release).	Nausea, constipation, headache, dizziness, dry mouth, insomnia.	~5% average loss at 1 year; ~45–50% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Orlistat 120 mg (prescription) — Xenical®	Adults: BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with risk factors. Some plans cover for ages 12–16 with pediatric obesity.	12+ (Rx) or 18+ (OTC)	With each fat-containing meal (pill).	Oily stools/spotting, gas with discharge; may reduce vitamins A, D, E, K (take multivitamin).	~3% average loss beyond placebo; ~35–40% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.
Phentermine — Adipex-P® (and others)	Adults: short-term use only; typically, BMI ≥ 30 , or ≥ 27 with risk factors. Often excluded by insurers.	17+	Daily pill (short-term, a few weeks).	Dry mouth, insomnia, nervousness, faster heartbeat, higher blood pressure.	3–5% average loss over 12 weeks; variable response.
Oral superabsorbent hydrogel — Plenity®	Adults: BMI 25–40 (overweight or obese). Coverage varies; some cash programs available.	18+	Capsules before lunch & dinner.	Fullness/bloating, abdominal discomfort, constipation.	~6% average loss at 6 months; ~60% achieve $\geq 5\%$ weight loss.

Insurance note: Coverage varies by plan. Many insurers require a certain BMI and a history of lifestyle changes. Prior authorization is common.

Important safety reminders:

- **Do not use GLP-1/GIP (Wegovy®, Zepbound®, Saxenda®)** if you or your family have **medullary thyroid carcinoma** or **MEN2**.
- Tell your clinician right away for **severe stomach pain, yellowing of skin/eyes**, or **signs of pancreatitis**.
- All treatments work **best with nutrition, activity, sleep, and behavior support**.
- **Pregnancy & breastfeeding:** Several medicines are **not safe**—please discuss birth control and family planning before starting.