



Semaglutide for Weight Loss

There is always a need for safe and efficient weight loss treatments. Semaglutide, the newest anti-obesity drug, has been gaining attention for more than three years after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved it in 2021. Initially intended exclusively as a diabetic treatment, the injectable drug is the first since Saxenda (2014) to be licensed for the treatment of chronic weight control.

At least 33% of men and 68% of women in South Africa are categorized as overweight or obese ([Statistics South Africa, 2016](#)). For that reason, obesity has been declared [South Africa's new HIV epidemic](#). In fact, there have been calls to declare obesity as a chronic disease and for public health measures to be put in place. While we encourage individuals to curb their appetite, we should not forget that "[Everything around us is priming us to gain weight](#)". There are environmental factors that influence our eating behaviours, like easy access to junk food and frequent adverts promoting junk food on social media. Semaglutide is an excellent addition to lifestyle weight-loss measures since it assists in controlling "food noise" or cravings. It is not a magic medication, though, and not everybody should use it.

Why Worry About Obesity

It is important to remember that [obesity is heterogeneous, chronic, and complex](#). Obesity has no known treatment. It needs individualized holistic approach that targets the root causes of obesity.



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What is Semaglutide?

Semaglutide is a member of a group of drugs called GLP-1 agonists, or glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists. It functions similarly to the GLP-1 hormone, which the stomach releases after eating. That is how it [reduces the food craving cravings](#), which most overweight people struggle with. GLP-1 has a function that includes encouraging the body to create more insulin, which lowers blood sugar (glucose). Because of this, doctors have been treating Type 2 diabetes with semaglutide for more than 15 years.



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Higher doses of GLP-1, however, also affect the brain regions that control hunger and let you know when you're full. It can result in significant weight loss when combined with diet and exercise, and in obese or overweight persons, it can lower their risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

Semaglutide for Weight Loss

Semaglutide is authorized for use in diabetes mellitus. However, more people use semaglutide off-label to help manage weight. This has resulted in a global shortage of Ozempic, the original brand of semaglutide. Fortunately, pharmaceutical companies are coming up generic versions of semaglutide, which are now available from compounding pharmacies in South Africa.

You need to take subcutaneous (under the skin) weekly self-injections. There are no oral tablets (pills). So, if you are a scared of self-injections semaglutide is not for you.

How Effective is Semaglutide in People Who Are Not Diabetic

Semaglutide, an anti-obesity medication, has been shown to significantly promote weight loss and appetite suppression in a preliminary experiment involving 2,000 obese adults. After 68 weeks, nearly one-third lost 20% of their body weight, compared to only 2.4% in the control group.

After discontinuing semaglutide, weight loss often recurrence, emphasizing the importance of dietary and exercise modifications, along with the use of anti-obesity drugs. No weight loss programme can be sustainable without lifestyle interventions like exercise and dietary change.

What Adverse Effects Might Injections of Semaglutide Cause?

Semaglutide side effects are usually minor, especially in comparison to the problems that come with being overweight or obese. Gastrointestinal problems, such as discomfort, nausea, vomiting, or distension (bloat), are the most frequent complaint among patients beginning semaglutide.

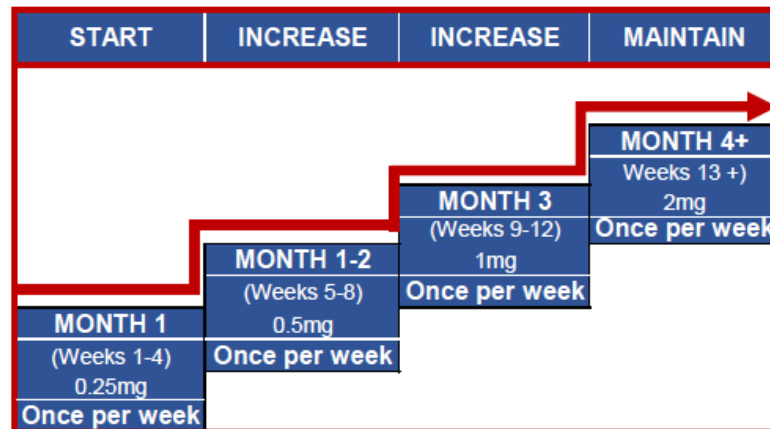
Other common side effects, which are considered minor, include:

- Fatigue and dizziness



- Digestive problems, including gas, diarrhea, and constipation
- Headache

Semaglutide injections can be optimally administered at a dose low enough to minimize adverse effects without compromising benefits. Gradually increasing the dosage, even for higher doses, is crucial, as the doctor customizes the dosage to meet individual patient needs.



Who May Use Semaglutide for Weight Loss?

The FDA suggests using semaglutide to lose weight if any of the following applies to you:

- Have at least one weight-related illness, such as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, or high cholesterol, in addition to a body mass index (BMI) of 27 kg/m² or above.
- Have a BMI of at least 30 kg/m².

Who Should not Take Semaglutide for Weight Loss

Stay away from semaglutide if you have:

- Medullary thyroid cancer history
- Gallbladder disease history
- Past medical history of pancreatitis with type 2 multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome (MEN2)

Take the Next step

The first thing you should do if you're thinking about using semaglutide to lose weight is book a consultation with our functional medicine practitioner. She can recommend the best course of action for your programme once she is familiar with your personal and family medical history. Your risk profile is determined during the initial consultation. It's possible that you'll need to undergo some baseline blood testing, which can be completed at the pathology lab closest to you. Speak to our doctor about appropriate (and safe) combinations of diabetic medications if you already take another drug and have diabetes.

Costs

We do not accept medical aid as payment for our services. Depending on your prescription dosage, semaglutide injections might cost anywhere from R3000 to R6000 each month. We do arrange for the injections to be delivered directly to you. Please note that we are not allowed, by law, to dispense medication to customers who haven't consulted our doctor.



Our Partners



We do our diagnostic tests at accredited laboratories like Lancet, Ampath, Fagron Genomics, Geneway, Biometrix, DNAnalysis and MDS laboratories. Functional laboratories do not get funded by your medical aid. We source our high-quality products from renowned suppliers like Amipro Metagenics, Willow Wellness, Genologix, Xymogen, Idexis, Fagron and similar suppliers.

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