



GLP-1 THERAPY AT WELLKC

GLP-1 stands for glucagon-like peptide-1. This is a naturally occurring hormone in your body that helps regulate blood sugar, appetite, and digestion. GLP-1 receptor agonists are medications that mimic the effect of this hormone.

GLP-1 medications include Wegovy or Ozempic - generic name semaglutide - and Zepbound or Mounjaro - generic name tirzepatide. We use these medications to support weight management and for the treatment and prevention of type 2 diabetes. These are once weekly subcutaneous injections that you administer at-home.

GLP-1 medications work by slowing gastrointestinal (GI) movement which helps you get full faster and stay full longer. They also decrease overall appetite, cravings, and “food noise” - basically the constant thinking about food that most of us experience all day every day. They help improve your body’s response to and balance of insulin and blood sugar. They help insulin resistance - a main driver of weight gain, difficulty losing weight, hormone imbalances, and many other health issues. **They also have beneficial anti-inflammatory effects and can help improve things like PCOS, joint pain, and autoimmune disorders.**

We always start these medications at a low dose. This helps reduce potential side effects and helps your body ease onto the medication. When we start these medications or increase the dose, you may experience some side effects. Some people respond well to a small dose of medication. Others may need a higher dose for the best effect. Some people lose weight during the first month of taking these medications, but some do not. Do not be discouraged if you don’t see any weight loss or notice a big effect right away. We may need to increase your dose before you notice an optimal effect.

We frequently use compounded versions of semaglutide and tirzepatide. These are made by a specialty compounding pharmacy using the exact same active ingredients plus a small amount of something like B12, B6, or glycine to help prevent side effects. With compounded medications, we have the ability to use smaller or more specific doses which is beneficial for minimizing side effects or if we only need very small doses. Some people do really well with “micro-dosing”, which just means using a small dose, sometimes less frequently than every week.

We will check in 3-4 weeks after starting your medication and after any dose adjustments. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you however we can. You can message us through our patient portal or text us at 913-513-2166.

PRICING

Compounded medications are not covered by insurance.

Semaglutide pricing ranges from \$220 to \$320 per vial depending on vial size. Depending on your dose and vial size, a vial may last anywhere from 5 to 12 weeks.

Tirzepatide pricing ranges from \$400 to \$550 per vial depending on vial size. Depending on your dose and vial size, a vial may last anywhere from 4 to 12 weeks.

Tirzepatide is typically more effective and most people have fewer side effects. You may also need a smaller dose with tirzepatide compared to semaglutide.

If your insurance plan covers a brand name GLP-1 medication such as Wegovy or Zepbound - great! Requirements for these medications are typically either a BMI of 30 or greater OR a BMI of 27-29 plus a weight related health issue such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. If you aren't sure about your insurance coverage, you can reach out to your insurance company and ask them if Wegovy or Zepbound are covered for you for weight management. If they are covered, ask what your actual cost will be (sometimes it can still be expensive). Make sure they know that you do not have diabetes. They will sometimes tell you that another medication version is covered, but really it may only be covered if you have diabetes.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF GLP-1 MEDICATIONS

- **Nausea** - This is one of the most common side effects. It tends to occur 1-2 days after you do an injection. Eating small, regular meals and snacks can be helpful. Make sure to eat sufficient protein. Avoid greasy, fried, or particularly unhealthy foods. Keep bowels moving regularly. If nausea is very bothersome, please reach out and we can send in a prescription nausea medication.
- **Constipation** - Since these medications slow down GI movement, they can cause constipation. We want to be very proactive about preventing or treating constipation. Make sure that you are drinking plenty of water, eating plenty of fiber, and getting in plenty of movement. If needed, you can start taking over the counter magnesium at night to help with bowel regularity. Magnesium citrate, oxide, or l-threonate are typically the best forms of magnesium for this. You can also add in over the counter remedies such as stool softeners, miralax, laxatives, etc. If you are not sure what to take or if you are having significant trouble with constipation, please reach out.
- **Heartburn** - If you already have heartburn, this may worsen while taking this medication. Avoid eating large portions of food. Avoid trigger foods such as spicy or greasy foods. Wait at least 2 hours before laying down after eating. It is fine to take over the counter medications like tums, Pepcid, or Prilosec if needed.
- Less common side effects include fatigue, hair loss, pancreatitis, or tingling sensation to skin.
- Some people will develop adverse reactions to alcohol while taking this medication. You may have a stronger response to alcohol or it may cause GI upset like nausea, vomiting, stomachache. If you do decide to drink alcohol while taking this medication, we recommend starting with one light drink, taking it slowly, and closely monitoring for any adverse reactions. Sometimes this medication will simply take away the desire to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or consume other addictive substances.
- There is a small chance that tirzepatide, Zepbound, or Mounjaro can temporarily decrease the effect of oral birth control pills due to its effect on GI movement and absorption. If you are taking oral birth control for pregnancy prevention, we recommend using a backup contraceptive method such as condoms for at least 4 weeks after starting one of these medications or increasing the dose.

TIPS ONCE YOU ARE USING A GLP-1 MEDICATION

These medications are an amazing tool that we use in conjunction with healthy eating, exercise, and healthy lifestyle. It is important to work on or continue these healthy habits. Some of the most important and basic things are:

- **WATER** - Drink at least 70-80 ounces of water daily - ideally more
- **PROTEIN** - You need a lot of lean protein. Most of us need **at least** 60-70 ounces of protein per day. This varies based on body size, exercise regimen, and goals. Eating 100+ grams of protein per day has been shown to have excellent health benefits.
- **FIBER** - Fiber is so important. You should consume **at least** 25 grams of fiber daily. 30-50 grams is an optimal goal. Fiber helps with weight management, blood sugar regulation, digestion, and bowel regularity. It can also help lower cholesterol levels and prevent certain cancers.
- **AVOID PROCESSED FOODS**
- **WALKING** - Shoot for at least 10,000 steps daily. It is helpful to track your steps for motivation and accountability. You want to be moving as much as you can every day.
- **STRENGTH TRAINING** - If you are not already incorporating strength / weight training into your routine, now is the time to start. We do not want to lose muscle mass as part of our weight loss. We want to maintain and increase our muscle mass. Healthy muscle mass helps weight management and is an important part of overall hormone balance. You want to get at least 2-3 strength training sessions per week.

HIGH PROTEIN FOODS:

- Chicken, turkey, eggs
- Fish - especially salmon, sardines, tuna
- Organ meats - liver, kidney, pate
- Nuts and seeds
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas
- Tofu
- Dark leafy green vegetables
- Red meat - but it isn't overall ideal to have red meat more than 1-2 times per month

HIGH FIBER FOODS:

- Chia seeds
- Almonds, walnuts, pistachios
- Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Avocado
- Raspberries, blackberries, blueberries
- Lentils
- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Split peas

It can also be helpful to check a comprehensive lab panel to see if there are any specific deficiencies or abnormalities that may be making it harder to lose weight. Just let us know if you are ever interested in additional lab work or other testing.

You can weigh yourself however often you desire or feel comfortable with. Your weight fluctuates up and down every day, so you may drive yourself crazy if you weigh every day. If you like to track your weight, we recommend weighing once per month or at the most once per week. If you don't want to weigh yourself - that is completely fine too. We want to measure progress based on how you feel, how your body feels, how your clothes feel, etc. Your weight and BMI are just small pieces of the overall picture.

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES

Great resource for strength training:

- Courtney Holland, Any Weight Fitness - Courtney is another amazing local mom and business owner! She lives in Lenexa with her husband of 10 years and their 3 young children. She has a Masters degree in Kinesiology, is a Certified Exercise Physiologist and specializes in cardio pulmonary rehab. She is also a Certified Personal Trainer who specializes in strength training and enjoys helping people who want to lose weight through a healthy diet and exercise. In her “free time” she makes amazing, FREE workout videos for her YouTube channel that are perfect for busy moms (or anyone else) at any experience level. She also offers personalized one-on-one coaching for both diet and exercise.

[Courtney Holland - Any Weight Fitness YouTube Channel](#)

anyweightfitness.com

For additional nutrition support:

- I highly recommend Ashley Moore - a fellow Johnson County mom, RN, and certified nutrition coach. Ashley specializes in nutrition support, weight management, inflammation reduction, mindset work, gut health, and more!

embracewellnesswithashley.com/

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Other:

[Subcutaneous Injection Instructions Video](#)

If you ever need **additional syringes**, you can order them through Amazon: [GLP-1 Syringes](#)