



GLP-1 Conversation Starter

Questions and Checklist to Discuss with Your Health Care Team When You Are Considering or Prescribed a GLP-1

Bring this to your next visit. Consider and check off each item as you discuss it with your care team.

☐ How do these medicines work and how will they affect my body?

- ☐ In simple terms, how will a GLP-1 help my health?
- ☐ Do I have any health conditions or take any other medications that make a GLP-1 risky for me to take?

These medicines can help the pancreas release insulin when it's needed, reduce sugar made by the liver, slow how quickly food leaves the stomach, reduce appetite, and increase weight loss. Some GLP-1 RAs can provide protection for organs such as your kidneys, liver, and heart.

☐ Dosing: what is my personal plan?

- ☐ Can you outline how and when we will increase my dose of this medication?
- ☐ When will we stop increasing the dose?
- ☐ How will I know what dose is the right one to stay on long-term?
- ☐ What should I do if I miss a dose? Who should I contact with questions?

Many side effects can be avoided or improved by starting low and increasing slowly ("start low, go slow").

☐ Side effects: what should I expect?

- ☐ What common side effects should I expect at first (such as nausea, feeling full, burping, constipation, or diarrhea), and how long might they last?

- ☐ Which serious symptoms mean I should call the clinic or seek urgent care right away (e.g., severe stomach pain, persistent vomiting, or signs of dehydration)?
- ☐ What everyday steps can I take to prevent or reduce stomach symptoms?

Try the “5 Ss”: slow down; small meals; simple foods; stop when comfortably full; separate dinner and sleep by 2-3 hours. Additionally, you can sip clear liquids, get fresh air/light activity, avoid drinking through straws, and avoid heavy exercise right after meals.

☐ **Safety checks: what should I know about this medication?**

- ☐ If I have a history of pancreatitis, gallbladder disease, or thyroid cancer in my family, what do I need to know?
- ☐ Tell your clinician before starting. These issues can change whether a GLP-1 is right for you or how it's monitored.
- ☐ **Pancreatitis:** If you've had it before, your clinician may choose a different option or add extra monitoring. *Call right away* for severe stomach pain that won't go away.
- ☐ **Gallbladder disease (gallstones):** GLP-1s can sometimes trigger gallbladder problems. *Call* if you get upper-right belly pain, fever, yellowing of skin/eyes, or pale stools.
- ☐ **Thyroid cancer in the family:** Tell your clinician if anyone has had medullary thyroid cancer (MTC) or the genetic disorder multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2 (MEN2). Some GLP-1s are *not recommended* if there's a personal/family history of either.
- ☐ **If my medicine is an injection, can you show me how to inject and rotate sites?** Ask for a hands-on demo. Here's a quick view:
 - **Where to inject?**
 - **Abdomen:** Front belly fat between ribs and hip bones. **Stay 2 in (5 cm) away from the belly button.**
 - **Thigh:** Front or outer thigh (avoid the inner thigh).
 - **Rotation matters:** Use a *different spot each time* to protect skin and keep absorption steady. Move at least 1-2 inches from the last spot.
 - **How should I store my medicine?**
 - **Keep it in the refrigerator** (not the freezer) **until first use.** Do not freeze.
 - **Protect from heat and light.** Keep in the original carton.
 - **Room temperature time** (after you take it out) depends on the brand. Your pharmacist will confirm the exact number of days.
 - **Do not use** if it's expired, discolored, frozen, or looks damaged.

Travel tip: Use an insulated pouch with a cool pack; don't let the pen touch ice.

☐ Sticking with it: expectations, progress, and myths

Check in with your provider on your long-term goals and what plan works best for you by addressing the following:

- ☐ What goals should we set for my health (A1C, weight, heart, liver, and kidney health), and how will we track them?
- ☐ If I worry about muscle loss or not enjoying food, what can we do to prevent that?
- ☐ Will I regain weight if I stop? How do maintenance plans work?

☐ Access and support

- ☐ What should I do if the pharmacy is out of stock? What should I do if I cannot afford my medication?
- ☐ Ask the pharmacy to *check sister locations* and *transfer* the prescription.
- ☐ Request the pharmacist to place you on a *wait list* and *notify* you when it arrives.
- ☐ Call your insurer to ask which **in-network pharmacies** regularly stock it (mail-order may help)
- ☐ Who on the care team (nurse/diabetes educator/pharmacist/dietitian/mental health) can I contact for coaching?
- ☐ Ask your prescriber about lower-cost dose strengths, mail-order, or 90-day fills if allowed
- ☐ When is my next check-in, and how do I reach you between visits?

- Check with your provider on next visit setup options by addressing the following aspects:

Next appointment date/time: _____

Visit type: ☐ In-person visit ☐ Video/telehealth ☐ Phone

Between visits: Use ☐ Patient portal ☐ Clinic phone: _____

Urgent issues: Severe belly pain, vomiting that won't stop, signs of dehydration, allergic reaction—call the clinic or 911 as directed by your care team.

NOTES/QUESTIONS FOR MY CARE TEAM