



Managing Stomach (GI) Side Effects with GLP-1 Medicines



Simple tips to feel better and know when to call your care team

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Mild nausea, feeling full, burping, or changes in bowel habits (constipation or diarrhea) are common when starting a GLP-1 or increasing the dose.
- You will likely be on a plan to increase your dose slowly over a period of time to reduce these side effects.
- Side effects usually improve as your body gets used to the medicine.
- Tell your care team if symptoms are intolerable and impacting your activities of daily living – we can slow dose increases or give more tips.

THE “5 SS” FOR EASIER EATING

- Slow down: eat slowly and without distractions.
- Small portions: smaller meals more often.
- Simple foods: avoid fried, fatty, spicy, very rich, or very sugary foods at first.
- Stop when comfortably full.
- Separate dinner and sleep by 2-3 hours.

EVERYDAY TIPS TO REDUCE NAUSEA OR UPSET STOMACH

- Sip clear liquids or broth; avoid fizzy (carbonated) drinks.
- Keep a simple food diary to learn which foods or mealtimes bother you.
- Try a small snack (e.g., crackers, apple, mint, or ginger) 30 minutes before or after your dose.
- Avoid strong smells and avoid drinking through a straw.
- Skip heavy exercise right after meals; get fresh air and try light activity like a short walk instead.

IF YOU'RE VOMITING OR HAVE DIARRHEA

- Focus on fluids such as clear drinks and broth-based soups; skip sports drinks.
- Eat small amounts more often.
- Avoid dairy, laxative juices (prune), coffee, alcohol, soft drinks, very hot or very cold foods, and candies or desserts that contain sweeteners ending in “-ol” (sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol, maltitol). Many “low sugar” or “diet” products contain these, including gum.
- Temporarily cut back on high-fiber or gas-producing foods (whole-grain breads, seeds, beans, lentils, cabbage/cauliflower, onions/garlic, certain fruits and veggies).

IF YOU'RE CONSTIPATED

- Make sure you get enough fiber (add it back gradually as you feel better).
- Move more – regular physical activity helps.
- Drink plenty of water or other sugar-free liquids.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR CARE TEAM

- If nausea or vomiting persist, try having drinks 30-60 minutes before or after meals (not with meals).
- Call right away if you have ongoing or severe symptoms such as strong stomach pain, nonstop vomiting/diarrhea, or signs of dehydration.

YOUR PERSONAL PLAN

- Eat smaller meals and choose simple foods for the next 1-2 weeks.
- Use the 5 Ss and avoid lying down right after eating.
- Sip clear liquids/broth; avoid fizzy drinks and straws.
- Keep a simple food and symptom diary.
- Avoid heavy workouts right after meals; try light walks.
- Call the clinic if symptoms last or get worse.

NOTES/QUESTIONS FOR MY CARE TEAM

NOTES/QUESTIONS FOR MY CARE TEAM (Cont.)

REFERENCES

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