

# Weight Loss Drugs and Older Adults

The weight-loss drug Wegovy is now available to patients in Canada.

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## What is Wegovy?

Wegovy contains the same medication as Ozempic, which was specifically developed to treat type 2 diabetes.

The two drugs have the same active ingredient but Wegovy carries a higher weekly dose of semaglutide of 2.4 milligrams, compared to 1 mg in a single Ozempic dose.

### **The higher semaglutide dose increases the appetite suppressant effect.**

Clinical trials showed that Wegovy was not only safe and effective for weight loss, but also had a positive impact on other weight-related measures such as blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels.

# How Does it Work?

The GLP-1 drugs slow digestion by keeping food in your stomach longer and sending signals to your brain to tell you you're full, and research shows that it may even change your appetite for certain foods, like those high in calories.

In addition to patients with obesity, doctors can prescribe Wegovy to patients with a BMI of  $27\text{Kg/m}^2$  and at least one weight-related medical condition. That could include hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, and obstructive sleep apnea.

For example: a man standing 5 foot 11 inches and weighing 200 lbs would have a BMI of  $27.9\text{Kg/m}^2$ . He would qualify if he had one weight-related medical condition.

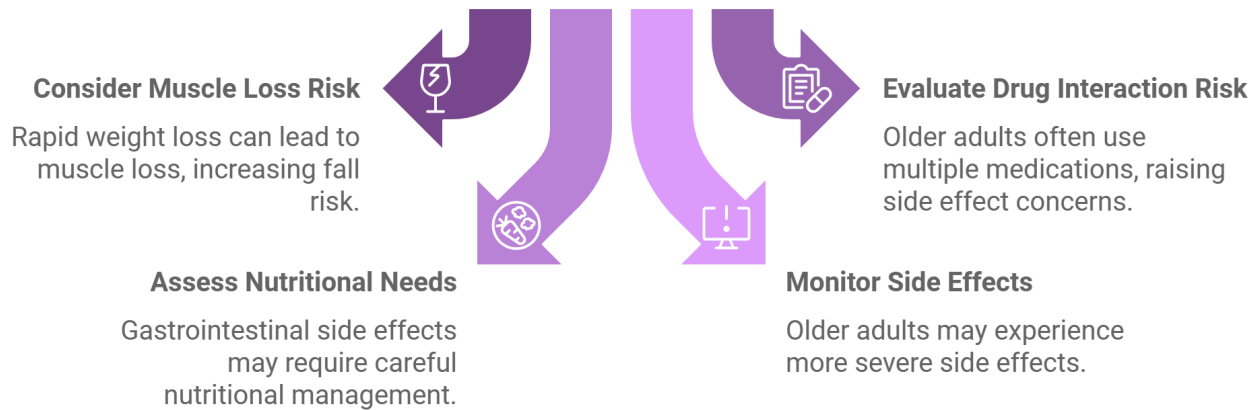
In Canada, Wegovy is approved to be used with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity.

The obesity drugs should be coupled with lifestyle changes to get the best results and minimize the chance of weight regain in the future.

One thing that isn't clearly understood, however, is how these medications might affect adults ages 65 and up who are using them long-term.

## Risk Factors to Consider:

## Should GLP-1 drugs be prescribed to older adults?



1. GLP-1 drugs can cause rapid weight loss, which can lead to loss of muscle which can be especially dangerous for older people as it may put them at higher risk of falls which can lead to broken bones.
2. Older adults tend to be using multiple medications for a variety of medical conditions, which puts them at greater risk for drug side effects.
3. Seniors may also need to take more precautions with nutrition and hydration, to deal with gastrointestinal side effects.
4. While most people report mild to moderate side effects, older adults are more likely to report more severe side effects.

For these reasons, seniors may require extra monitoring from their healthcare providers to mitigate potential health risks.

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