

SOUTHBOURNE SURGERY

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Dear Patient,

You are currently prescribed tirazepatide (Mounjaro), semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy, Rybelsus), dulaglutide (Trulicity) or liraglutide for weight loss and/or diabetes. This group of medications are collectively known as GLP-1RAs or GIP receptor agonists.

If obtaining this privately (from a non-NHS prescriber), they are responsible for the safe prescribing and monitoring of these medications, so do ensure that this is dispensed from authorised sources, such as registered online pharmacies, to avoid the risk of receiving falsified pens.

Noteworthy medication interactions

These medications work partly by slowing down how your stomach empties. This can affect how well other medicines are absorbed by your body. It is therefore important to be aware of the following information:

If you take the CONTRACEPTIVE PILL

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro)

This medicine may reduce how well the pill works.

You should:

- Use a non-oral contraceptive method (e.g. coil or implant) OR
- Add a barrier contraceptive method (like condoms) for 4 weeks after starting or increasing the dose.

Use extra protection (like condoms) if you have vomited or had diarrhoea and follow the missed pill rules (see the leaflet that comes with your pill pack) if you vomit within 3 hours of taking the pill or have diarrhoea for more than 24 hours.

Semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy, Rybelsus) and others

These do not appear to reduce effectiveness of the pill.

Side effects like vomiting or diarrhoea can still reduce how well the pill is absorbed, so you should still use extra protection (like condoms) if you have vomited or had diarrhoea and follow the missed pill rules (see the leaflet that comes with your pill pack) if you vomit within 3 hours of taking the pill or have diarrhoea for more than 24 hours.

Please be aware that all manufacturers of these weight loss medications advise a period of time off them before trying to get pregnant, but it varies between the different

medications as per the information below. Please speak to the person providing your weight loss medication if you are thinking of becoming pregnant or contact your GP if you find out you are already pregnant on these medications.

Further information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/GLP1-patient-info>. Please contact the practice or the Family Planning Clinic if you would like to discuss your contraception.

If you are taking Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

This applies if your HRT includes progesterone **tablets**, such as:

- Progesterone or Utrogestan
- Norethisterone
- Medroxyprogesterone acetate

There is concern that both Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) and Semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy, Rybelus) may reduce how well your HRT tablets are absorbed. This could lead to irregular bleeding and may affect the protection of your womb lining (potentially leading to an increased risk of endometrial cancer).

Your HRT will therefore require review. So that we can continue prescribing your HRT safely, please contact us on 01202 427878, to book an appointment with your GP to discuss the best choice for you.

If you are on Insulin or a sulphonylurea (e.g. gliclazide) - the dose of either of these may need to be reduced to reduce the risk of hypoglycaemic events – please consult your diabetic team.

If you are taking Warfarin - you may need closer monitoring of your INR. It is important to inform the anticoagulation clinic you are taking these medications.

If you are taking other medications, such as FLOZINS or blood pressure tablets

Flozins, which are used in the treatment of diabetes, can increase your risks of problems such as diabetic ketoacidosis, where your blood becomes too acidic due to a build-up of ketones. Other drugs, such as blood pressure medications, may need their dose adjusting as you lose weight to avoid complications such as your blood pressure dropping too low. The responsibility for advising you about these risks and for coming up with a management plan as to what you should do should lie with the health professional who has prescribed you the medication. If they have not done this, please contact them to discuss.

Information on side effects

- Common gastrointestinal side-effects of GLP-1RAs treatment (including nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and constipation) can persist for several days and may affect more than 1 in 10 patients. This may result in dehydration, which if severe may lead to other serious health complications such as kidney damage resulting in hospitalisation.
- Throughout treatment stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids (such as water) to avoid dehydration.

- Other serious but less common side-effects of GLP-1RAs include acute gallstone disease, pancreatitis, and serious allergic reactions
- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) is a possible side effect with GLP-1 receptor agonists and dual GLP-1/ GIP receptor agonists. In rare reports this can have serious or fatal outcomes.
 - **Seek urgent medical attention if you experience severe, persistent abdominal pain, that may radiate to your back and may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting, as this may be a sign of pancreatitis**
 - Do not restart GLP-1 receptor agonist or GLP-1/GIP receptor agonist treatment if pancreatitis is confirmed
- Semaglutide treatment has, in extremely rare cases, been linked to a serious eye condition called **Non-Arteritic Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy (NAION)** which can affect your vision.
 - **NAION** usually affects one eye at a time
 - **If you notice a change in your eyesight, such as sudden blindness or your eyesight gets worse very quickly in one or both of your eyes during treatment with semaglutide, urgently attend eye casualty (if available in your area) or A&E**
 - You may be referred for an eye examination by an ophthalmologist
- **Carefully read the instructions for use in the Patient Information Leaflet, and use the prescribed dose**
- If you are concerned about any side-effects, speak to a healthcare professional

'Sick Day rules'

- If GLP-1s are taken during an acute illness that can lead to dehydration (Vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, not eating and drinking normally), there is an increased risk of developing serious side-effects and therefore should be stopped and not restarted until 24-48 hours after eating and drinking normally.

If you are experiencing problems or have further questions, please make an appointment with your GP to discuss this further.

Please be aware that further guidance may be issued around weight loss medications as we learn more about their longer-term effects and interactions with medications. **The patient information leaflet that comes with the medication should contain all the latest information.** Always discuss your other medications with the person who prescribes your weight loss medication and ensure you understand any potential interactions and risks posed by them. Keeping your weight within safe limits will improve your health and we strongly support you in that journey.

Yours sincerely,
Southbourne Surgery