

What are GLP-1 Medications?

- ✓ GLP-1 is short for Glucagon-Like Peptide 1 Receptor Agonists (GLP-1 RAs).
- ✓ GLP-1 RAs are a relatively new class of medications that reduce hunger. The first GLP-1 RA received approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2005 to treat type 2 diabetes.
- ✓ GLP-1 RAs lower blood sugar levels when elevated and have been found to promote weight loss. Recently, they have started being used for pre-diabetes, obesity, and sleep apnea.
- ✓ GLP-1 RAs are under study for treatment of liver disease associated with metabolic syndrome, which is relevant to Alpha-1-related liver disease. For more information, see the metabolic health document located at <https://www.alphanet.org/community/alphanet-one-pagers/>.
- ✓ GLP-1 RAs are also under study for treatment of depression and substance use disorders.
- ✓ The average weight loss on most of these medications is about 8% of body weight in 4 months.
- ✓ There are many GLP-1 RAs, including:
 - Semaglutide (brand names include Ozempic, Wegovy, and Rybelsus)
 - Dulaglutide (brand name Trulicity)
 - Liraglutide (brand names include Victoza and Saxenda)
 - Exenatide (brand names include Byetta and Bydureon)
 - Tirzepatide (brand names include Mounjaro and Zepbound)
 - Lixisenatide (brand name Adlyxin)
- ✓ These medications are typically injected via a needle into the fatty tissue that is just under the skin. This is called a subcutaneous injection.

Are There Generic Versions of GLP-1 RAs?

- ✓ There currently are no FDA-approved generic versions of GLP-1 RAs. The usual cost in the US for a brand-name GLP-1 RA is more than \$1000 per month.
- ✓ GLP-1 RAs may be compounded by a pharmacy. This is not the same as a generic version.
- ✓ A compounded GLP-1 RA contains the same active ingredients as a brand-name drug, but it has not been approved by the FDA.
- ✓ Compounded GLP-1 RAs are often more affordable than brand-name GLP-1 RAs, but they have not been tested for safety or effectiveness.

What are the Side Effects of GLP-1 RAs?

- ✓ Possible side effects of GLP-1 RAs include:
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Constipation
 - Headaches
 - Bowel obstruction (blockage of the small or large intestine)
 - Bile duct blockage
 - Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)
 - Gallstones
 - Gastroparesis (stomach takes too long to empty)
- ✓ Since these medications are relatively new, there is limited information about the side effects of using these medications over an extended time.

Do I Still Have to Exercise and Eat Healthy?

- ✓ Exercise and a balanced diet are still important, even for people who are taking a GLP-1 RA. In fact, diet and exercise are part of the treatment plan for individuals who take these medications.
- ✓ If you lose weight on the medication, building a healthy diet and exercise plan will allow you to maintain your weight loss even if you stop taking the medication.

Should I Talk to my Healthcare Provider About Taking a GLP-1 RA?

- ✓ As with all medications, the decision to prescribe a GLP-1 RA is up to your healthcare provider.
- ✓ AlphaNet does not formally endorse or discourage the use of these medications.
- ✓ While weight management is an important aspect of being healthy, GLP-1 RAs are only one potential option for managing your weight. These medications may be a useful tool, but the cost and potential side effects (both short and long term) must be considered.