

# Six-month Ozempic shortage mostly over after weight-loss craze drained supply

March 20 2023, by Emma Court

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Novo Nordisk A/S replenished supplies of Ozempic, a treatment for diabetes, after social media-driven enthusiasm over the drug's use for weight loss led to six months of shortages.

Two common doses of Ozempic are now available again, according to an

update posted on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's drug shortage database that Novo confirmed in a statement. A third, higher dose of the drug may have limited availability in late March, the FDA and Novo said.

Researchers who developed Ozempic to control [blood sugar](#) in people with type 2 diabetes, which afflicts some 35 million Americans, also found the medication helped patients shed an average of 8 to 14 pounds. Reports on TikTok and other [social media platforms](#) from people taking the drug led to a run on Ozempic, which costs about \$900 a month. Similar diabetes treatments like Eli Lilly & Co.'s Mounjaro also sold briskly, leaving patients scrambling to fill prescriptions.

Doctors often prescribe drugs like metformin, a cheap medication that has been around for many years, to [patients](#) with diabetes. But new treatments like Ozempic are increasingly recommended because, in addition to their effects on blood sugar and obesity, they may reduce the risk of cardiovascular events such as stroke. However, only about 4% of eligible adults are taking them, a recent study found, possibly because of their [high costs](#).

Patients had trouble finding alternatives to Ozempic during the shortage, sometimes going without treatment. Extended periods of uncontrolled blood sugar can raise the risk for complications including heart attacks, infections, kidney and eye disease and death; even short-term bouts of high blood sugar can cause complications.

Ozempic is among a group of drugs that mimic glucagon-like peptide 1, a hormone that helps knock down appetite and control blood sugar. Patients typically begin on lower doses before moving to more potent ones, to temper the drugs' gastrointestinal side effects.

Ozempic's starter dose, a 0.25 milligram weekly injection, and a

commonly used 0.5 milligram maintenance dose are both available again. The highest dose of Ozempic, 2 milligrams, had previously been listed as available but now will likely have limited availability until the end of the month, according to the FDA.

Other [diabetes](#) drug shortages also appear to have resolved. Lilly's Mounjaro and Trulicity are both available, according to the FDA, though they're still listed on the agency's [drug](#) shortage website. Earlier this year, Novo resolved a shortage of obesity [treatment](#) Wegovy, which contains the same ingredient as Ozempic at a higher dose.

2023 Bloomberg L.P.

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Six-month Ozempic shortage mostly over after weight-loss craze drained supply (2023, March 20) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-six-month-ozempic-shortage-weight-loss-craze.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--