

New weight-loss drug Zepbound is now available, company says

December 6 2023, by Robin Foster



The newly approved weight-loss medication known as Zepbound is now available for patients to take, drug maker Eli Lilly announced Tuesday.

"Today opens another chapter for adults living with obesity who have been looking for a new treatment option like Zepbound," Rhonda Pacheco, group vice president of Lilly Diabetes and Obesity, U.S., said in a company [news release](#).

"The availability of Zepbound in U.S. pharmacies is the first step, but we have to work hand-in-hand with employers, government and health care industry partners to remove barriers and make Zepbound available to those who need it," Pacheco added. "We are excited to see growing [insurance] coverage in the marketplace, giving millions of Americans access to Zepbound."

It was only last month when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [approved](#) Zepbound as a weight-loss medication. Tirzepatide, the [active ingredient](#) in Zepbound, had already been approved by the FDA as a treatment for type 2 diabetes called Mounjaro.

To trigger weight loss, tirzepatide mimics two hormones, GLP-1 and GIP, which stimulate the release of insulin in the body. It quiets appetite and slows the rate at which food moves through the stomach, helping patients feel full. Novo Nordisk's weight-loss medication, Wegovy, uses semaglutide, which only focuses on GLP-1.

That difference translated to greater weight loss with Zepbound than Wegovy, a recent study found. Zepbound has been [found to prompt up to a 20.9% drop in weight](#) at [higher doses](#), while Wegovy patients typically see a [15% reduction in weight](#).

According to the FDA, Zepbound's most common side effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation and diarrhea, according to the FDA.

The drug's label will also have warnings about the potential for inflammation of the pancreas, gallbladder problems, [low blood sugar](#),

[acute kidney injury](#), damage to the retina in people with type 2 diabetes, and suicidal behavior or thinking.

How widely Zepbound will be covered still remains unclear, *CNN* reported. Medicare and Medicaid can't cover obesity medications, but Lilly said it is offering a savings card for people with [private insurance](#) to get Zepbound for \$25 for a one- or three-month prescription if their plans cover it. For those whose plans don't cover Zepbound, the savings card would lower the cost to \$550 per month, or roughly half the list price, the company said.

Amid skyrocketing demand for [weight-loss](#) drugs, many of these wildly popular drugs have faced supply shortages in recent months.

More information: Visit the Mayo Clinic for more on [weight-loss medications](#).

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