

Coming off Ozempic slowly could prevent weight gain, study shows

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Patients could wean themselves off blockbuster obesity drugs such as Ozempic or Wegovy without piling the pounds back on, according to a scientific study.

Data presented at the [European Congress on Obesity](#) in Venice, Italy on Sunday provides some of the first evidence that it could be possible to stop taking Novo Nordisk's Ozempic or Wegovy and not regain any weight that has been lost—as long as a healthy lifestyle is maintained.

When drugs like Ozempic and Eli Lilly's Zepbound were first launched, they were pitched as long-term medicines, with research indicating that patients regain large amounts of the weight they have lost when they stop taking the drugs.

The Danish study of patients using semaglutide, which is the [active ingredient](#) in Ozempic and Wegovy, alongside a weight management program run through the Embla app, suggests that tapering the [drug](#)—instead of a hard stop—could potentially prevent weight regain.

However, just 353 patients were in the sample of patients who stopped semaglutide, which is a small study size. These patients had reached their target weight and reduced their semaglutide dose over nine weeks. Patients continued to lose weight as they tapered, losing an average of 2.1% over the nine weeks.

The study also suggests that patients might be able to maintain their weight for several months after stopping. The researchers had data for 85 patients at 26 weeks after stopping semaglutide, and found that they maintained a stable weight.

"The combination of support in making [lifestyle changes](#) and tapering seems to allow patients to avoid regaining weight after coming off semaglutide," said Henrik Gudbergsen, lead researcher and Embla's chief medical officer, in a statement.

Obesity drugs have led to a surge in investment and a race to capture a market that analysts at Goldman Sachs forecast could hit \$100 billion by

2030.

The study also looked at changing how semaglutide doses are ramped up when patients begin taking the drug. The 2,246 patients in the wider study started on semaglutide alongside advice from a nutritionist. They also had access to doctors, nurses and psychologists through Embla.

The patients' doses were closely monitored and increased more slowly than standard treatment. The average weight loss was 14.8% at 64 weeks, similar levels to other studies of semaglutide.

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