

TVFHT Drug Info Blast: Switching between GLP-1 and GIP/GLP-1 products



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- Saxenda® (liraglutide daily injection for weight management) will be unavailable beginning in October 2025 due to an anticipated shortage. **Saxenda will be discontinued in March 2026.**³
- Weight regain is common after discontinuing GLP-1 receptor agonists: 50-66% of weight loss may be regained within 1 year of stopping.^{1,4,5} Patients may elect to switch to another medication for ongoing weight management.
- Zepbound® (tirzepatide weekly injection) is a new option for weight management in Canada.

Table 1: Agents currently approved for weight loss in Canada^{1,2}

Generic and brand name	Formulation	Average weight loss at 1 year	Monthly cost	ODB or NIHB coverage?	CV outcome trial (CVOT) evidence*
Tirzepatide (Zepbound®)	Weekly SC injection	15-21%	\$400-800	No	Pending – trial underway ⁶
Semaglutide (Wegovy®)	Weekly SC injection	15%	\$400-500	No	CV benefits in SELECT trial ⁷
Liraglutide (Saxenda®)	Daily SC injection	8%	\$400-500	No	No CVOT for patients with obesity regardless of diabetes status.
Naltrexone-bupropion (Contrave®)	Tablets twice daily	6%	\$250-350	No	
Orlistat (Xenical®)	Tablets thrice daily	3%	\$200	No	

*CV = cardiovascular, CVOT = cardiovascular outcome trial. Focus on trials in obesity regardless of diabetes status.

Question: How do I switch from daily liraglutide to weekly semaglutide or weekly tirzepatide?

Stop liraglutide injection (last dose = day 0). On the day the next liraglutide dose would have been due (**day 1**), start the new weekly injection (see Table 2 for approximate dosage conversion). Titrate dose as usual.

Question: How do I switch from weekly semaglutide to weekly tirzepatide?

Stop the original weekly injection (last dose = day 0). On the day the next dose would have been due (**day 7**), start the new weekly injection (see Table 2 for approximate dosage conversion). Titrate dose as usual.

Table 2: Comparative doses of liraglutide, semaglutide, and tirzepatide for weight loss⁸⁻¹²

Agent	Comparative doses (adapted from Whitley et al, 2023) ⁸								
Liraglutide SC daily	0.6 mg	1.2 mg	1.8 mg or 3 mg						
Semaglutide SC weekly		0.25 mg	0.5 mg	1 mg	2 mg to 2.4 mg				
Tirzepatide SC weekly			2.5 mg		5 mg	7.5 mg	10 mg	12.5 mg	15 mg

If concerned about GI side effects, consider switching to a lower comparative dose of the new agent, or simply starting the new agent at the usual initial dose and titrating up.

Question: What is the most cost-effective GLP-1 medication for weight management?

Bottom line: Weight loss and cost of GLP-1 medications is dose dependent. **Options for cost savings only apply to lower doses of the medications**, which will likely not achieve maximum weight loss benefits.

- **Ozempic and Wegovy are the same medication (semaglutide) and the only difference are the pens:** Ozempic pens range from 0.25 mg to 1 mg weekly, Wegovy pens range from 0.25 to 2.4 mg weekly.
- Ozempic pens are less expensive than Wegovy at ~\$300/month. At doses less than 1 mg, Ozempic (prescribed off-label for weight management) is less expensive than Wegovy. At 1 mg or more weekly, patients pay full cost.
- “Click-counting” is an **off-label** practice where patients extract smaller doses from higher strength pens to reduce costs. It is not recommended by manufacturers due to potential dosing variability and errors.
 - Click-counting for semaglutide 0.5 mg weekly reduces the cost to ~\$150/month. Patients are prescribed the 1 mg Ozempic pen and instructed to count to 38 clicks to administer an approximate dose of 0.5 mg. [Click here for more information on Ozempic click counting](#).
 - Click counting can be done with Wegovy pens. [More information on Wegovy click counting](#). There is also an [online Wegovy calculator tool](#) available*.
 - Click counting can be done with Mounjaro (tirzepatide for type 2 diabetes) pens: [More information on Mounjaro click counting](#).

Question: Is there any way that weight loss medications are covered by public drug plans (e.g. OHIP, NIHB)?

No. **Only patients with type 2 diabetes** (LU code criteria) can receive ODB coverage for GLP-1 medications.

Question: Are private drug plans covering GLP-1 products for weight loss?

Private plan coverage is variable. Have patients ask their insurance company for pre-authorization forms or instructions.

Question: What other cost-savings measures are available?

GLP-1 and GIP/GLP-1 medications have cost-savings cards that can help with copay costs, regardless of if they have private coverage. Patients must self-register and submit their information to the community pharmacy. Click on the brand name to be directed to the patient registration page: [Ozempic](#), [Wegovy](#), [Mounjaro](#), [Zepbound](#).

GLP-1 RA = glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor agonist; GIP = glucose-dependent insulintropic polypeptide; SC = subcutaneous

*Online Wegovy calculator is accurate as of August 2025. We cannot guarantee ongoing accuracy of this tool.

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Resources and references

1. [Medications for Weight Loss in Adults](#), B.C. Provincial Academic Detailing (PAD) Service
2. [Pharmacotherapy for Obesity Management Clinical Tool](#), Centre for Effective Practice
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