PATIENT EDUCATION · METABOLIC HEALTH

Integrative Mental Health of the Midwest
Patient Education Series

Understanding Tirzepatide

A once-weekly medication that works with your body's own fullness and blood-sugar hormones to support weight, metabolic, and whole-body health.

BRAND NAMES
Mounjaro® · Zepbound®
Same active ingredient: tirzepatide

HOW IT'S TAKEN
Once weekly
Small injection under the skin of the belly, thigh, or upper arm

MEDICATION TYPE
Dual GIP + GLP-1
The first medicine to activate both hormone receptors

DOSING
Start low, go slow
Begins at 2.5 mg; increased in steps about every 4 weeks as tolerated

THE BASICS

What is tirzepatide?

After you eat, your gut releases two natural "incretin" hormones — **GIP** and **GLP-1**. They tell your pancreas how much insulin to release, signal your brain that you're full, and help your body handle the energy from food.

Tirzepatide is a single molecule designed to act on **both** of these hormone receptors. Because it lasts much longer than the natural hormones, one dose works around the clock for a full week.

> **Why "dual" matters:** In a head-to-head 72-week trial, people taking tirzepatide lost an average of **20.2%** of their body weight compared with **13.7%** on semaglutide, a GLP-1-only medication.

COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE FORMS

Typical approved uses

2022	**Type 2 diabetes** — improves blood sugar (Mounjaro); now approved for ages 10 and up
2023	**Chronic weight management** — adults with obesity, or overweight plus a weight-related condition (Zepbound)
2024	**Obstructive sleep apnea** — moderate to severe, in adults with obesity (Zepbound)
2026	**Heart protection** — lowers risk of heart attack, stroke, or cardiovascular death in adults with type 2 diabetes at high risk (Mounjaro)

These approvals apply to brand-name Mounjaro® and Zepbound®. Compounded tirzepatide is not FDA-approved; your provider will explain how it fits your care.

BRAIN + BODY

How it works

In the brain

- **Hunger center (hypothalamus).** Turns down hunger signals and turns up fullness, so smaller portions feel satisfying.
- **Reward pathways.** Appears to quiet "food noise." In studies, cravings for sweets, fatty, and fast foods dropped — while cravings for fruits and vegetables did not.
- **Brainstem.** Relays fullness signals from the gut. Research suggests the GIP action here may help soften nausea.

In the body

- **Pancreas.** Releases insulin only when blood sugar is elevated, and lowers glucagon, which keeps the liver from over-producing sugar.
- **Stomach.** Slows emptying, so you feel full longer after meals.
- **Fat tissue & liver.** Improves how fat is stored and burned, raises the protective hormone adiponectin, and reduces liver fat.
- **Heart & blood vessels.** Lowers blood pressure, triglycerides, and markers of inflammation.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Potential benefits

Results below come from clinical trials; individual results vary. Each card is labeled so you can see how strong the evidence is.

FDA-APPROVED Approved use of brand-name forms

STRONG EVIDENCE Large randomized trials

EMERGING Promising trials, more coming

EARLY RESEARCH Being actively studied

Metabolic health

Meaningful, lasting weight loss — FDA-APPROVED

15–21% average body weight lost over 72 weeks

In the SURMOUNT-1 trial, more than half of people on the highest dose lost 20% or more of their body weight, versus 3% on placebo.

Blood sugar & type 2 diabetes — FDA-APPROVED

2.0–2.3 pts A1C reduction over 40 weeks

In SURPASS-2, tirzepatide lowered A1C more than semaglutide 1 mg while also reducing weight, and improved insulin sensitivity.

Heart & cardiovascular protection — FDA-APPROVED

38% fewer heart-failure events (HFpEF)

Now approved to lower heart attack, stroke, and cardiovascular death risk in high-risk type 2 diabetes. It also reduced worsening heart failure in people with obesity and HFpEF.

Better sleep & breathing — FDA-APPROVED

Up to 63% fewer breathing interruptions

About 30 fewer apnea events per hour of sleep. Up to half of participants reached remission or mild, symptom-free sleep apnea.

Fatty liver (MASH) — EMERGING

44–62% resolution vs. 10% on placebo

In a 52-week biopsy trial, fatty-liver inflammation (MASH) cleared without worsening scarring in most participants, and about half saw improved fibrosis.

Blood pressure & cholesterol — STRONG EVIDENCE

−10 mmHg systolic blood pressure in one trial

Trials show consistent improvements in blood pressure, triglycerides, total cholesterol, and insulin resistance.

Inflammation & inflammatory conditions

Lower whole-body inflammation — STRONG EVIDENCE

Up to 55% lower hs-CRP vs. placebo

hs-CRP and IL-6 — key inflammation markers tied to heart disease, pain, and mood — fell substantially. Early drops were seen before major weight loss occurred.

Healthier fat tissue — STRONG EVIDENCE

Up to 48% higher adiponectin

Excess fat tissue releases inflammatory signals. Tirzepatide shifted these toward a calmer profile: protective adiponectin rose and leptin fell.

Psoriasis — EMERGING

41% vs. 29% complete skin clearance

Added to the biologic ixekizumab (Taltz®) in adults with psoriasis and excess weight, more people reached completely clear skin than with the biologic alone.

Psoriatic arthritis — EMERGING

44% vs. 16% major joint improvement at 1 year

Combined with ixekizumab, joint symptoms improved far more than with the biologic alone — with some benefit appearing as early as week 4.

Brain & behavior

Less "food noise" & fewer cravings

STRONG EVIDENCE

Studies show reduced hunger, preoccupation with food, and cravings for highly processed foods, plus less loss of control around eating.

Alcohol & other cravings

EARLY RESEARCH

Large health-record studies link newer GLP-1 medicines to fewer alcohol-related hospitalizations. Several randomized trials of tirzepatide are underway.

YOUR TREATMENT

What to expect

Common, usually temporary effects

Most side effects are digestive, mild to moderate, and most noticeable in the days after starting or increasing a dose. They typically ease as your body adjusts.

Nausea · diarrhea · constipation · decreased appetite · indigestion · vomiting · tiredness · mild injection-site redness

> **Your pace, your plan.** If side effects are bothersome, let us know. We can often slow the schedule or keep you at your current dose longer while your body adjusts.

Tips for feeling your best

- Eat smaller meals slowly and stop at the first sign of fullness.
- Prioritize protein at each meal and add strength training to protect muscle.
- Drink water steadily through the day, especially if you have GI symptoms.
- Go easy on greasy, fried, or very sweet foods, and on alcohol.
- Take your dose on the same day each week; rotate injection sites.

Call us promptly if you notice

- ! Severe stomach pain that won't go away, with or without vomiting (possible pancreatitis)
- ! Pain in the upper right belly, fever, yellow skin or eyes, or clay-colored stools (gallbladder)
- ! Vomiting or diarrhea that keeps you from staying hydrated
- ! A lump or swelling in the neck, trouble swallowing, or ongoing hoarseness
- ! Swelling of the face, lips, or throat, or trouble breathing — call 911
- ! New or worsening low mood, anxiety, or thoughts of self-harm (call or text 988 any time)
- ! Vision changes, if you have diabetes

Tell your provider before starting if you

- Have a personal or family history of medullary thyroid cancer or MEN 2 (tirzepatide should not be used)
- Have had pancreatitis, gallbladder, kidney, or severe stomach-emptying problems
- Take insulin or a sulfonylurea (risk of low blood sugar may rise)
- Use birth-control pills — add a backup method for 4 weeks after starting and after each dose increase
- Are pregnant, planning pregnancy, or breastfeeding
- Have upcoming surgery or sedation — your care team needs to know

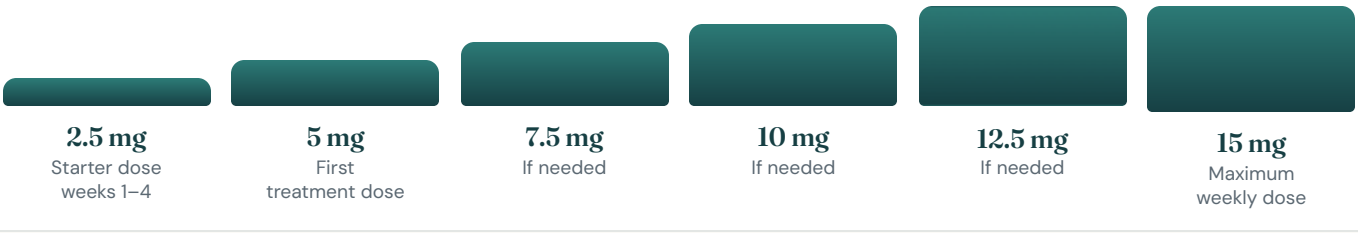
> **A long-term partner, not a quick fix.** Tirzepatide works best alongside nutrition, movement, sleep, and mental-health care. Benefits tend to continue while you take it; if it's stopped, appetite and weight often return, so we'll plan any changes together.

PARTNERING IN YOUR CARE

Getting the most from treatment

Your dosing journey

Doses increase gradually so your body can adjust. Each step lasts at least 4 weeks, and you may stay at whichever dose works best for you.



Four pillars that amplify results

1

Protein first

Aim for protein at every meal to preserve muscle while you lose fat.

2

Strength & movement

Resistance training 2–3 times a week keeps metabolism and strength up.

3

Fluids & fiber

Steady water, vegetables, and whole grains ease constipation and nausea.

4

Sleep & mood

Rest and mental-health support strengthen appetite and stress regulation.

PRICING & CONSULTS

Scan to view pricing and request a consult

Pick your weekly dose to see vial options, weeks of supply, and the best 3-month value. Consult fee: **$99** for new GLP-1 starts; **waived** if you're currently on a GLP-1 or took one within the last 6 months (proof of treatment required).

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My questions & notes

Important: This handout is for general education and does not replace advice from your healthcare provider or the official Medication Guide. Trial results reflect group averages under study conditions; your results may differ. Some uses described here are investigational or off-label. Boxed warning: tirzepatide caused thyroid C-cell tumors in rats; it is unknown whether it causes these tumors in humans. Compounded formulations, if prescribed, are not FDA-approved and have not been reviewed by the FDA for safety, effectiveness, or quality.

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