



BETTER RESULTS, STARTING NOW

your nutrition roadmap for GLP-1 therapy

In this brochure, you will discover:

How to bridge the gap between clinical treatment and everyday plate-based solutions.

Developed by a multidisciplinary team of dietitians and health experts, this guide provides our evidence-based 'recipe' for your success:

- 1 Science-backed foundations:** understanding how GLP-1 medications work with your body to manage hunger and why complementary nutritional and lifestyle changes are essential for long-term success.
- 2 The plant-forward advantage:** why shifting towards plant foods can reduce gastrointestinal side effects and naturally aligns with your changing appetite and food preferences.
- 3 The GLP-1 balanced plant-based plate:** our practical blueprint for maximising nutrient density, protecting your muscle mass, and supporting digestive comfort.
- 4 Targeted nutritional tools:** strategic advice on meeting protein targets, fibre regulation for gut health, smart hydration timing, and ensuring intake of essential nutrients.
- 5 Long-term vitality strategies:** comprehensive guidance on muscle-preserving exercise, strategic supplementation, and monitoring your overall health to ensure lasting results.

A message from the experts

This guide is more than a weight-loss manual; it is a roadmap for supporting GLP-1 therapy through a sustainable, plant-forward approach. By prioritising 'food as medicine,' we provide the tools needed to optimise your health outcomes today while protecting the planet for tomorrow.

Note: This brochure is not a substitute for professional nutritional or medical advice but is intended to support your therapy. Always consult your healthcare provider to tailor these recommendations to your specific health needs.

Introduction

Obesity is a defining health challenge of our time. Affecting more than 1 billion people globally, it contributes to millions of preventable deaths each year. Yet, for too long, the global response has been fragmented, underfunded, and hindered by the outdated view of obesity as a mere 'lifestyle choice.' In reality, it is a **multifactorial chronic, progressive, and relapsing disease**.

A pivotal shift occurred on December 1, 2025, when the World Health Organization (WHO) released its first-ever clinical guidelines recommending **GLP-1 receptor agonists** for the long-term treatment of obesity. At the same time, the WHO emphasised that these drugs are **not a standalone solution**: they work best when combined with comprehensive nutrition and lifestyle support, rather than replacing it. ¹



While medication alone won't solve this global health crisis, GLP-1 therapies can help millions overcome obesity and reduce its associated harms."

— Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

Fuelling your journey: a plant-forward approach

This guide bridges the gap between clinical treatment and everyday plate-based solutions. Developed by a multidisciplinary team of dietitians, public health nutritionists, and food technology experts, it offers an evidence-based roadmap for supporting GLP-1 therapy.

By prioritising a **sustainable, plant-forward approach**, we provide the practical tools needed to use food as medicine – optimising your health outcomes today while protecting the planet for tomorrow.



What GLP-1 does naturally

Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) is a **hormone produced naturally in your small intestine and brain**. It is released immediately after you eat to signal to your body that fuel has arrived.²

The three main tasks of natural GLP-1:

- **In the brain:** it acts as a 'fullness switch,' telling your brain that you have had enough to eat, which naturally reduces your appetite and interest in food.
- **In the stomach:** it slows down digestion (gastric emptying). This keeps food in your stomach longer, helping you feel satisfied for an extended period after a meal.
- **In the pancreas:** it signals the pancreas to release insulin and suppress glucagon secretion, which helps manage blood sugar levels by moving glucose into your cells and reducing its release to the bloodstream.

How GLP-1 drugs work

While our natural GLP-1 hormone is very effective, it is also very short-lived – the body breaks it down in just a few minutes. **GLP-1 medications are designed to mimic this natural hormone but are modified to last much longer in the system.** This provides a steady, sustained signal of fullness that helps manage the chronic nature of obesity more effectively than the body's natural 'bursts' of the hormone. This results in improved glycaemic control, substantially reduced caloric intake and consequent weight reduction.^{2 3 4 5}

As of 2026, several medications are approved by health authorities specifically for **chronic weight management**. While you may recognise these active ingredients from diabetes treatments, they are prescribed under specific names when used for weight health.⁷

Primary medications for weight loss

- **Tirzepatide (Zepbound):** a weekly injection that mimics two hormones (GLP-1 and Glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide - GIP) to reduce appetite and improve how the body breaks down sugar and fat.⁸
- **Semaglutide (Wegovy):** available as a weekly injection or a daily oral tablet. It mimics the GLP-1 hormone to help you feel full sooner and for longer.⁹
- **Liraglutide (Saxenda):** a daily injection often used by those who prefer a shorter-acting medication or are just beginning therapy.¹⁰

A note on brand names

You may also hear names like **Ozempic**¹¹ or **Mounjaro**.¹² While these contain the same active ingredients (Semaglutide and Tirzepatide), they are officially approved and labelled for **Type 2 Diabetes**.¹³ Your healthcare provider will determine which version and dosage is right for your specific health needs.



Why complementary nutritional and lifestyle changes are important

While GLP-1 receptor agonists represent a breakthrough in treating obesity as a chronic disease, they are most effective when paired with high-quality nutrition and lifestyle changes. The WHO emphasises that these medications should be integrated with – rather than replace – intensive interventions to address the complex nature of obesity. Because these therapies often reduce appetite, focusing on nutrient-dense foods is essential to ensure the body receives vital vitamins and minerals from smaller portions. A strategic nutritional approach also helps preserve lean muscle mass, which is critical for maintaining a healthy metabolism during weight loss. By adopting a 'food as medicine' mindset, patients can better manage potential side effects and improve long-term metabolic outcomes. Ultimately, this synergy between clinical treatment and lifestyle habits creates a sustainable foundation for lasting health. This multi-modal strategy ensures that weight loss is not just a temporary change, but a permanent transition to lifelong vitality.^{14 15 16}

Why a plant-forward approach complements GLP-1 therapy and weight loss goals

As GLP-1 medications shift your physiological relationship with food, a plant-forward nutritional strategy provides the ideal framework for success. This approach aligns with how the body responds to treatment while maximising long-term health benefits.^{17 18}

1. Working with your changing appetite

GLP-1 receptor agonists reduce hunger by slowing gastric emptying, increasing satiety signals, and dampening the brain's reward signals for 'heavy' foods. Current data shows a shift in preferences: patients often report a decrease in the consumption of beef, pork, dairy and fried foods. Conversely, fruits, leafy greens, and water are often the categories to see an increase in intake.¹⁹ A plant-forward diet naturally leans into these shifting cravings, focusing on the fresh, light, and hydrating foods the body begins to prioritise.¹⁵

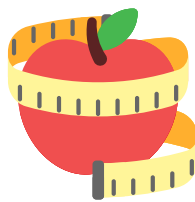
2. The power of fibre

A primary advantage of a plant-forward approach is its high fibre content. Systematic reviews consistently show that higher dietary fibre intake is favourably associated with successful weight management and a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.^{21 22 23} Fibre works in tandem with GLP-1 therapy to promote satiety, stabilise blood sugar, and support gut health, providing a dual-action mechanism for weight health.¹⁷



3. Prioritising nutrient density

Because GLP-1 therapy leads to eating smaller portions, every calorie consumed must provide high nutritional value. Plant-forward diets emphasise nutrient-dense foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. These foods are rich in fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients with antioxidant properties.²⁵ By following a plant-forward dietary pattern during GLP-1 therapy, patients can achieve a caloric deficit while helping their bodies remain nourished and reducing the long-term health risks associated with obesity.^{17 27}



Why a plant-forward approach complements GLP-1 therapy & weight loss goals

ADAPTING TO NEW CRAVINGS

More fresh, light, and hydrating foods



THE POWER OF FIBRE

Supports satiety, gut health, and blood sugar control



NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS

Vitamins, minerals & antioxidants



Promoting long-term health & weight loss success



The GLP-1 balanced plant-based plate

1. The Rainbow Base

Fruits & Vegetables (~50% of Plate)

- **5-a-Day:** Aim for 3 veg and 2 fruit portions daily.
- **Go Green:** Prioritise leafy greens for essential minerals.
- **Iron Hack:** Pair Vitamin C with lentils or oats to boost absorption.
- **Easy Access:** Frozen and pre-washed options are just as healthy.

2. Muscle Power

Protein (25–30% of Plate)

- **Protein First:** Eat this first to hit targets before you feel full.
- **The Goal:** Aim for 80–120g daily; spread 20–30g across each meal.
- **Top Picks:** Legumes, tofu, tempeh, and fortified soya dairy.
- **Bonus Sources:** Grains like quinoa and oats also add to your protein total.

3. Smart Energy

Smart Energy Carbohydrates (20–25% of Plate)

- **Quality Fuel:** Focus on whole-grain like oats and brown rice for fibre.
- **No Extremes:** Carbs are vital for energy—avoid severe restriction.
- **Swap Up:** Choose whole-grain bread and pasta over white versions.
- **Stay Comfort:** Use white rice or peeled potatoes if digestion feels “heavy.”

4. Smart Hydration

Timing and Quality

- **30/60 Rule:** Wait 30–60 mins after eating to drink; avoid “filling up” during meals.
- **Daily Goal:** Aim for 2–3L of fluids (more if exercising or in heat).
- **Top Picks:** Water and unsweetened teas are the gold standard.
- **Over 60s:** Drink intentionally, as thirst signals can naturally decrease.

5. Brain & Heart Fats

Healthy Fats (Small Portions)

- **Choose Wisely:** Focus on Omega-3s (flax, chia, walnuts) and olive oil.
- **Vitamins:** Healthy fats are essential for absorbing vitamins A, D, E, and K.
- **Watch the Gap:** Limit fats to 30% of your energy to manage calorie density.
- **Avoid:** Skip palm/coconut oil and fried foods.

6. The Fortified Boost

Nutrient Density in Small Bites

- **Calcium Boost:** Aim for 2 daily servings of fortified soya milk or yoghurt.
- **Label Check:** Choose cereals and plant-based meat alternatives with added Iron and B12.
- **Flavour Hack:** Use nutritional yeast for a cheesy taste plus B-vitamins.
- **Iodine:** Use iodised salt in moderation to support thyroid health.

7. Targeted Support

Strategic Supplementation

- **Essentials:** Vitamin B12 and Algae-based Omega-3s (EPA/DHA) are key.
- **As Needed:** Vitamin D for immunity and Iron for blood health.
- **Gut Regularity:** Use Psyllium husk to manage intestinal symptoms if needed.
- **Muscle Care:** Use protein powder if you can't hit targets with meals.

8. Nutrient Back-up

Meal Replacements

- **When to Use:** Ideal for early fullness or low-calorie days.
- **Schedule:** Replace 1–2 meals daily for weight loss, or 3–6 weekly for weight maintenance.
- **The Formula:** Look for 250–400 kcal and 20–30g of protein.
- **Fibre Check:** Ensure at least 7g of fibre per serving.

The GLP-1 balanced plant-based plate

When your appetite is smaller, every bite must work harder. This plate is specifically designed to maximise nutrient density, protect your muscle mass, and support digestive comfort while on GLP-1 therapy. This approach is inspired by the expert consensus statement by Sievenpiper and colleagues (2026) on nutritional management for individuals treated with GLP-1 receptor agonists.¹⁸



Source Adobe Stock

1. The foundation: fruits & vegetables (~50% of your plate)

- **The rainbow rule:** aim for five servings daily (three veg, two fruit). Varied colours mean a broader range of protective phytonutrients.
- **Leafy greens:** make kale, collards, spinach, and broccoli your 'daily go-to' for essential minerals.
- **The iron boost:** pair Vitamin C (peppers, citrus, papaya, kiwi, berries) with iron-rich meals (lentils, tofu, fortified cereals, amaranth) to maximise iron absorption.
- **Convenience counts too:** frozen berries and pre-washed greens are just as nutritious and save time.

2. The engine: protein-rich foods (25-30% of your plate)

- **Prioritise protein first:** eat your protein-rich foods at the beginning of each meal. This ensures you meet your requirements before the medication's 'fullness' signal takes effect. Plant-based proteins also provide important nutrients such as iron, zinc, folate, and magnesium.
- **Double up on legumes:** include beans, lentils, chickpeas, edamame, or lupins twice a day. They provide the essential protein and fibre needed for gut health and satiety. Canned and frozen options, as well as legume-based pastas, are excellent time-saving choices that count towards your daily goals.
- **The 'grain gain':** keep in mind that your whole-grain choices (like quinoa, oats, and pasta) also provide significant amounts of protein, not just carbohydrates.
- **Compact power:** if you feel full quickly, choose nutrient-dense, lower-volume protein-rich foods like extra-firm tofu, tempeh, textured soya, seitan, or fortified plant-based meats.
- **Smart sips:** fortified soya milk and yoghurt are excellent low-calorie protein sources.
- **Protein powders:** a helpful tool if your appetite is low or you are struggling to hit your daily targets.

Daily protein targets: achieving an adequate intake helps prevent muscle loss and keeps you satisfied longer.

- **Daily goal:** aim for 80–120 g of protein per day, or at least 1.0 g per kilogram of body weight.^{15 16}
- **Distribution:** if possible, try to spread your intake throughout the day, aiming for 20–30 g at each main meal.¹⁶

3. The fuel: whole grains & starchy foods (20-25% of your plate)

Carbohydrates are your body's primary energy source, essential for physical performance and post-exercise recovery.³² A successful weight-loss journey does not require severe carbohydrate restriction.^{33 34} In fact, extreme carbohydrate reduction may lead to fatigue and reduced intake of the fibre and micronutrients found in fruits and whole grains.²⁷

- **Prioritise whole grains:** choose foods like oats, brown rice, spelt, bulgur, barley, and millet. These provide the steady energy and fibre necessary for long-term weight health and satiety.^{36 37}
- **Smart pantry staples:** Choose high-fibre versions of everyday staples, such as whole-grain breads, pastas, tortillas, and fibre-rich breakfast cereals. These packaged options are convenient and contribute significantly to your daily fibre and protein targets. Whole-grain cereals and pseudo-cereals are also rich in B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium.
- **Powerhouse pseudo-cereals:** incorporate quinoa, amaranth, and buckwheat. These are naturally gluten-free and exceptionally nutrient-dense.
- **Starchy alternatives:** while potatoes, sweet potatoes, chestnuts, cassava, and yams are great whole foods, try to prioritise whole grains more frequently for their superior fibre and micronutrient profiles.
- **Gentle adjustments:** If you experience temporary digestive sensitivity or "heaviness," low-fibre options like white rice, peeled potatoes, or fortified corn flakes can be used to ensure you still meet your energy needs.



Healthy fats: quality over quantity

Dietary fats play a vital role in your health journey, especially for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K). However, because fats are calorie-dense, a small amount goes a long way. On a GLP-1 journey, focus on 'smart fats' that support heart health without overfilling your stomach.²⁷



- **Prioritise healthy unsaturated fats:** choose nuts (walnuts, cashews, almonds, peanuts, and pistachios) and seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame). Specifically, prioritise flax, chia, and hemp seeds, along with walnuts, to ensure a healthy intake of omega-3 fatty acids. Nuts and seeds are also good sources of zinc and selenium.
- **Nut butters and spreads:** natural spreads like peanut butter, almond butter, and tahini are excellent for adding nutrients to small snacks. Aim for versions with no added sugars or palm oil.
- **Whole-food fats:** include creamy sources like avocado, which provides fibre alongside healthy monounsaturated fats.
- **Smart cooking oils:** use liquid unsaturated oils such as extra virgin olive oil, rapeseed (canola), or soya bean for drizzling or light cooking. Sunflower oil can also be used, offering low saturated fat and high vitamin E. However, it is high in omega-6 fatty acids. While omega-6 fatty acids are not inherently inflammatory, an imbalanced intake with too little omega-3 may affect inflammatory pathways. Since many processed products already contain sunflower oil, our experts recommend giving preference to rapeseed and olive oil.
- **Mind the portion:** while these fats are healthy, they are energy-dense. Use small amounts to stay within your caloric goals while maximising nutrient absorption.
- **Oils to avoid:** limit or avoid palm oil and coconut oil, as these are high in saturated fats, which can negatively impact cardiovascular health and metabolic goals.

Daily fat targets

While fats are essential, they must be balanced to stay within your energy goals.³⁹

- **Total intake:** aim for your total fat intake to not exceed 30% of your total daily energy intake.
- **Portion control:** use small, intentional amounts to maximise nutrient absorption without overfilling your stomach.

The role of fortified foods in a balanced diet

When appetite is reduced, choosing nutrient-dense options becomes a practical way to meet daily requirements. Fortified foods can help bridge potential nutritional gaps, ensuring you receive essential micronutrients without needing to consume a higher volume of food.^{40 41 27}

- **Plant-based dairy:** aim for at least two servings per day (~250 ml of milk or ~200 g of yoghurt) of fortified soya options. These are excellent sources of calcium and Vitamins B2, B12, and D.⁴³
- **Smart cereals:** choose fortified breakfast cereals to boost your daily intake of iron and B-vitamins – a simple way to start your day with essential nutrients.⁴⁴ But make sure to use low-sugar options (<5g added sugar/100 g product).⁴⁵
- **Enhanced plant proteins:** when selecting plant-based meat alternatives, prioritise versions fortified with iron and Vitamin B12.⁴⁶
- **The 'savoury secret':** try nutritional yeast! It's a delicious, cheese-like seasoning often fortified with key B vitamins and minerals. It can be sprinkled on almost any savoury dish for a nutrient boost.
- **Iodised salt:** use iodised salt in moderation to help meet your body's daily iodine requirements for healthy thyroid function.⁴⁷

Pro Tip: Checking the label is a quick habit that ensures your favourite staples are doing double duty for your health goals.

Strategic supplementation

While a nutrient-dense, plant-forward diet provides the foundation for health, specific supplements can help ensure you meet your physiological requirements^{48 49} – especially when food intake is reduced during GLP-1 therapy.²⁷

Key essentials

- **Vitamin B12:** vital for energy and nerve health, as it is not naturally found in plant foods.
- **Omega-3 (algae oil):** provides EPA and DHA fatty acids for heart and brain health from a sustainable, plant-based source.



Source Adobe Stock

Situational support

- **Vitamin D:** helps maintain bone health and immunity, especially if sun exposure is limited.
- **Iron:** may be recommended to support blood health, particularly for those who menstruate.

Functional tools

- **Psyllium husk:** a helpful fibre source to support heart health, digestive regularity, and manage changes in bowel habits.^{18 52}
- **Protein powder:** a practical tool to help meet daily targets when appetite is low – perfect for shakes or fortifying your favourite recipes.¹⁶
- **Multivitamin:** a multivitamin may be considered if food intake is insufficient, during very low-calorie diets, or when gastrointestinal symptoms persist.⁵⁴

Note: always consult your healthcare provider to tailor these recommendations to your specific needs.

Meal replacements: a practical support tool

Meal replacements can be a safe and efficient way to ensure you are meeting your nutritional needs, especially when your appetite is low. These nutritionally complete formulas are designed to provide a balance of essential nutrients in a convenient, controlled portion.^{18 56}

- **When to use:** they are particularly helpful if you experience early fullness (satiety) or are following a medically supervised plan with a lower calorie intake.
- **Flexibility:** use them to replace one to two meals per day during active weight loss, or three to six per week to help maintain your weight in the long term.
- **What to look for:** for the best results, choose products where a single serving provides:
 - 250–400 kcal
 - 15–25 g of protein
 - At least 7 g of fibre
 - Essential vitamins and minerals
- **Low sugar:** opt for low-sugar versions ($\leq 5\text{g}/100\text{ g}$ for solids or $\leq 2.5\text{ g}/100\text{ ml}$ for liquids)



Source Unsplash | Melissa Walker Horn

Dietary fibre: the essential regulator

Adequate fibre intake is vital during GLP-1 therapy. It supports proper intestinal function, helps manage gastrointestinal side effects, stabilises blood sugar, and enhances the feeling of fullness.^{17 58}



Strategies for a Healthy Gut^{27 18 61 62}

- **The dual-fibre approach:** consume a variety of food groups to ensure you receive both types of fibre:
 - **Soluble fibre:** found in oats, barley, legumes, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and psyllium. This type supports heart health and improves stool form, protecting against both constipation and diarrhoea.
 - **Insoluble fibre:** found in leafy vegetables, whole-wheat, wheat bran, legumes, corn, nuts, and fruit skins. This adds bulk to the stool and helps maintain regular bowel movements.
- **The "low and slow" rule:** increase your fibre intake gradually over the weeks. Start with gentle, lower-fibre vegetables (such as iceberg lettuce, bell peppers, well-cooked zucchini, carrots, pumpkin, green beans, beets, and vegetable purées) and fruits (such as ripe bananas, melon, papaya, peeled apples, fruit purées, and unsweetened applesauce). Choose low-fibre grains like white rice, bread, and pasta, along with easily tolerated protein sources such as well-cooked legumes (in small portions), tofu, soya milk, soya yoghurt, and seitan. Then gradually introduce higher-fibre options. This approach allows your gut microbiota to adapt and help minimise discomforts like bloating or gas.
- **Dosage alignment:** you may need to adjust your fibre intake based on your current medication dose to better manage appetite and digestive side effects.
- **Fibre and fluid partnership:** fibre requires adequate hydration to work effectively. Drinking sufficient fluids is essential to help fibre move through the digestive system and prevent constipation.



Source Adobe Stock

Daily fibre targets

Aim for the following daily minimums to support long-term metabolic health:^{18 64 65}

- **Women:** ≥ 25 g per day
- **Men:** ≥ 30 g per day
- **If you have diabetes:** ≥ 35 g per day

Bridging the Gap

If you find it difficult to reach these goals through whole foods alone – often due to reaching fullness early – a fibre supplement such as psyllium may be recommended by your healthcare provider.¹⁸

Smart hydration: timing and quality

Proper hydration is essential for managing GLP-1 side effects and supporting overall health. However, how and when you drink is just as important as how much.^{17 18 27}

- **The 30/60 rule:** to avoid overfilling your stomach and to aid digestion, try not to drink large amounts during your meals. Instead, wait 30–60 minutes after eating. This helps prevent early fullness (satiety) and minimises potential nausea.
- **Daily targets:** aim for two to three litres of fluid per day. Remember that your needs may increase in high temperatures or during physical exercise.
- **Best choices:** water and unsweetened teas are the most effective ways to hydrate without adding unnecessary sugars.
- **Special note for over 60s:** as the sensation of thirst can decrease with age, being intentional about fluid intake is especially important for those over 60.

Monitoring your hydration a practical way to check your hydration levels is by observing the colour of your urine. Use the chart on the right as a daily reference.⁷⁰

Am I drinking enough water?

Use this urine colour chart to check how hydrated you are. It is important to drink plenty of water every day to stay healthy.



Graphic adapted from NSW Health 2024⁷¹

Important note: the colours on this chart should only be used as a guide and should not replace the advice of a health professional. Speak to your doctor if you are worried about the colour of your urine, the amount of water you drink, or signs of dehydration.



Energy: making every calorie count

Managing your energy intake is a balancing act. While a calorie deficit is mandatory for weight loss, your body still requires a baseline of energy to maintain vital functions, preserve muscle, and keep your metabolism healthy.⁷²

Personalised targets: your specific calorie needs are unique to your body, lifestyle, and health history. Always follow the personalised plan prescribed by your healthcare professional. However, general safe daily ranges for weight loss include:²⁷

- **Women:** 1,200–1,500 calories
- **Men:** 1,500–1,800 calories

Please note: consistently eating below these ranges can make it challenging to obtain the essential vitamins, minerals, and proteins your body requires to function optimally.²⁷

The quality factor: because GLP-1 medications significantly increase fullness and reduce appetite, your 'nutritional budget' becomes smaller. It is essential to choose nutrient-rich foods to ensure you are getting the most value out of every bite.

Communication is key: if you find it consistently difficult to reach your minimum calorie goals due to a lack of appetite, inform your healthcare professional. They can help you adjust your plan or medication dose to ensure you stay nourished.



Source Adobe Stock

Foods and beverages to avoid or limit

While the GLP-1 journey focuses on adding nutrient-dense foods, it is equally important to limit items that provide 'empty calories' or exacerbate side effects. Choosing high-quality nourishment over these items ensures you don't lose the opportunity to eat nutrient-rich foods before you feel full.

Items to limit or avoid ^{75 76 15}

- **Fried and high-fat foods:** greasy or deep-fried foods can significantly worsen gastrointestinal (GI) side effects like nausea and reflux, as they slow digestion even further.
- **HFSS foods (high fat, salt, and sugar):** fast foods, crisps, pastries, cookies, and sweets are calorie-dense but nutrient-poor. These can occupy your limited appetite without providing the nutrients your body needs.
- **Added sugars and carbonated drinks:** sugary beverages and sweets provide calories very quickly but no relevant nutrients and do not help you feel full. Carbonated drinks may cause bloating and discomfort, especially as your digestion slows.



Alcohol special considerations: limiting alcohol is strongly recommended for several clinical and practical reasons:^{18 76}

- **Gastrointestinal impact:** alcohol can worsen nausea, heartburn, reflux and stomach sensitivity during GLP-1 therapy.
- **Nutritional 'empty' calories:** alcohol provides significant energy (calories) without any essential nutrients, which can stall weight loss progress.
- **Behavioural impact:** alcohol can impair your judgement, leading to reduced adherence to your medication schedule and dietary goals.

Professional tip: think of your appetite as a 'nutritional budget.' By avoiding high-fat and high-sugar foods, you ensure your budget is spent on nutrient-rich foods.

Nutritional monitoring: proactive health management

Regular monitoring is a vital component of GLP-1 therapy. Because your food volume is reduced, being proactive about your nutritional status helps prevent deficiencies before they impact your well-being or stall your progress.¹⁵

Strategies for effective monitoring ¹⁷

- **Track your intake:** if you feel comfortable, use a food diary or a nutrition app to monitor your daily food groups consumption, energy and protein intake. This ensures you are hitting your targets (such as 80–120 g of protein) even on days when your appetite is significantly lower.
- **Regular clinical check-ups:** work with your healthcare provider to monitor your micronutrient levels through periodic blood tests. Key markers to track include Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, iron (including ferritin), and folic acid.
- **Listen to your body:** be aware of the physical signs that may indicate a micronutrient gap. While some symptoms can be common side effects of the medication, persistent issues should be evaluated.

Symptoms to watch for: ²⁷

- Fatigue or unusual weakness
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Frequent headaches
- Noticeable hair loss or brittle nails

Professional guidance: Always speak to your doctor or a registered dietitian if you notice persistent symptoms or if your dietary tracking shows consistent gaps. Following the advice of a health professional ensures that any necessary adjustments to your diet or supplement regimen are based on your unique clinical needs.





Managing side effects and protecting long-term health

While GLP-1 medications are generally well-tolerated, proactive management is essential to ensure treatment success and long-term vitality.

1. Navigating gastrointestinal symptoms

Gastrointestinal symptoms are the most common side effects of GLP-1 therapy, typically occurring during the initial weeks or when increasing the dose. While these effects are usually mild and temporary, proactive management is essential to prevent dehydration, ensure proper nutrient absorption, and maintain your overall well-being.¹⁵

Common symptoms and clinical impact ^{15 85 86}

- **Primary symptoms:** nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, constipation, and stomach pain.
- **Other effects:** heartburn, reflux, fatigue, headache, and potential hair loss.
- **The risk:** if symptoms become severe or ongoing, they can significantly reduce food and fluid intake. This may lead to dehydration, poor nutrition, and a loss of muscle mass, which can ultimately impact your energy levels and mental health.

Practical strategies for comfort and success: ^{15 76 89 90}

To help your body adapt and minimise discomfort, consider the following evidence-based adjustments:

- **Eat smaller, frequent portions:** eating smaller, more frequent nutrient-dense meals rather than two to three large meals throughout the day can prevent the 'heaviness' that leads to nausea.
- **Prioritise hydration:** stay well hydrated to support healthy gut movement. Sip water, herbal teas, or electrolyte-rich drinks regularly throughout the day, especially if you experience diarrhoea or vomiting. To help reduce nausea, try drinking fluids 30–60 minutes before or after meals rather than during them.
- **Mindful eating:** eat slowly and chew thoroughly. This allows your brain time to receive the signal of satiety before you become overfull, which is a major trigger for nausea, reflux, and indigestion.
- **Identify digestive triggers:** many patients find that alcohol, carbonated drinks, and high-fat, fried, or spicy foods can worsen gastrointestinal symptoms. Identifying and avoiding these triggers – especially during the first few weeks of therapy or after a dose increase – is a key step in maintaining digestive comfort.
- **Fibre and movement for regularity:** to manage constipation, gradually increase your intake of both soluble and insoluble fibre (found in oats, legumes, whole-wheat bread, kiwis, prunes, nuts, and seeds), get adequate water, and stay physically active to support healthy gut motility. Supplementing with psyllium can be considered if the constipation persists.

Complementary tips: ¹⁵

- Anti-nausea medications can provide relief while you are adjusting to therapy and during dose escalation. Try a ginger supplement, extract, or tea as a complementary option.
- Avoid skipping meals, which may exacerbate nausea or gastric discomfort. To reduce reflux, try to avoid lying down after eating and finish your last meal at least two hours before bedtime.
- If gastrointestinal side effects are persistent or severe, contact your healthcare professional for further management.

2. Preserving muscle and bone health

While the goal of GLP-1 therapy is weight loss, ideally it should come exclusively from fat-mass reduction. However, rapid weight loss carries a risk of losing muscle and bone mass.¹⁵ Muscle is far more than just a tool for movement; it is a vital metabolic organ that regulates blood sugar, supports the skeleton, and ensures long-term physical independence.⁹³



The risks of muscle loss ⁹⁴

- **Metabolic slowdown:** excessive muscle loss can lower your resting metabolic rate, making it harder to maintain your weight health in the long term.
- **Physical function:** a decline in muscle and bone mass can potentially reduce strength and mobility, increasing the risk of falls, fractures, or physical disability.
- **Who is most at risk?** These risks are particularly significant for older adults or individuals who are less physically active during their weight-loss journey.

The strategy: a dual approach to protection

Eating enough protein is important, but protein alone is not enough to protect muscle mass.^{15 96 18} Regular resistance training is essential to help preserve muscle and support bone health during weight loss.^{98 99} To stay strong and functional, a combined strategy is essential:¹⁶

- **Embrace resistance training:** strength-building exercises – such as using resistance bands, lifting weights, or performing body-weight movements like squats – are the most effective way to signal to your body to keep its muscle. Aim for at least two sessions per week. Incorporate weight-bearing activity: walking, jogging, or even gardening can help stimulate bone remodelling, keeping your skeletal system strong as your body weight changes.
- **Prioritise protein-rich foods:** aim to include a variety of protein-rich foods in your meals. On a plant-forward diet, focus on versatile options like beans, lentils, chickpeas, quinoa, tofu, tempeh, seitan, soya milk and soya yoghurt.
- **Monitor your intake:** because GLP-1s reduce appetite, you must be intentional about eating enough. Focusing on 'protein-first' at mealtime ensures you hit your targets even when you feel full quickly.

Professional tip: think of protein and exercise as a partnership. Protein provides the building blocks, but resistance training provides the 'blueprint' that tells your body where to use them.

3. Addressing nutritional needs

Obesity is a complex, chronic disease often associated with pre-existing micronutrient deficiencies. When using GLP-1 therapy, these risks can be exacerbated by nausea, reduced food intake and variety, and changes in food preferences. Because you are eating less, it is essential that every bite delivers maximum nutritional value.¹⁸

Recognising the gaps: research indicates that individuals managing obesity often face specific nutritional challenges: ^{27 103}

- **Common deficiencies:** low levels of Vitamin D, B1, B12, folate, iron, and zinc are frequently observed.
- **Inadequate intakes:** many individuals also show insufficient intake of calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, E, and C.

As appetite decreases and satiety increases, dietary variety can naturally decline. Without professional nutritional guidance, this reduced intake makes the strategic selection of foods vital to prevent long-term deficiencies and maintain energy levels.

The strategy: prioritising nutrient density

To bridge these gaps and support your body during transformation, focus on a “nutrient-first” approach: ^{15 27}

- **Focus on ‘colourful’ plates:** vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and seeds are naturally packed with the vitamins and minerals that GLP-1 users need most.
- **Focus on bioavailability:** support nutrient absorption by pairing foods wisely – for example, consuming Vitamin C-rich foods (like citrus or bell peppers) alongside iron-rich plant foods (like lentils or amaranth).⁴⁹ Supplement strategically: given the high prevalence of Vitamin D and B12 deficiencies, consult with your healthcare provider or dietitian about a tailored supplementation plan to complement your diet.
- **Hydrate with purpose:** if you find it difficult to eat large amounts of greens, consider nutrient-dense smoothies or vegetable-based broths to maintain your intake of magnesium and potassium.



Professional tip: When your appetite is low, your ‘nutritional budget’ is smaller. Investing that budget in whole, plant-forward foods help you nourish your cells, rather than just filling your stomach.

Physical activity and exercise: moving for longevity

Physical activity is a vital partner to GLP-1 therapy. While these medications assist with weight loss, regular physical activity helps ensure that the weight you lose comes mostly from fat rather than functional muscle or bone – thereby helping preserve the strength and mobility needed for a high quality of life.^{96 108}

Everyday movement

Staying active shouldn't just be limited to the gym; it can be integrated into your daily routine.^{16 18 111}

Routine activity: incorporate movement into your day through gardening, housework, taking the stairs, or walking the dog.

- **Step goals:** if you prefer measurable targets, aim for 5,000–10,000 steps per day. This serves as an excellent foundation for your overall health.
- **Reduce sedentary time:** aim to break up prolonged periods of sitting, such as screen-based leisure time or office work.



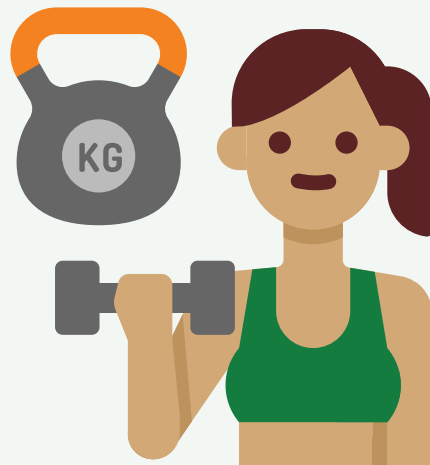
Structured physical exercise

For optimal health and body composition, aim for a balance of two types of exercise: ^{112 113}

- 1 Aerobic exercise (150–300 minutes per week):** engage in moderate-intensity activities like brisk walking, swimming, hiking, cycling, or dancing. This supports heart health and calorie expenditure.
- 2 Muscle-strengthening exercise (two to three times per week):** perform resistance training for about 30 minutes per session using weights, machines, resistance bands, or your own body weight.

Muscle-strengthening exercise

2-3 times a week



Prioritisation: Strengthening exercise is the most effective way to preserve muscle and bone mass during weight loss. If your time is limited, **prioritise strength training** over aerobic exercise. ^{98 99}

Getting started and staying consistent ^{96 18}

- **Start slow:** if you are new to exercise, begin with just 10 minutes per day. Gradually increase the duration and intensity as your fitness improves.
- **Customise to your level:** your goals should match your current physical capacity to ensure safety and long-term adherence.
- **Progress over perfection:** any physical activity is better than none. Don't let a 'perfect' workout get in the way of a 'good' one.
- **The key to maintenance:** continue your routine after reaching your target weight. Regular exercise is the most effective tool for preventing weight regain.
- **Make It social:** combine exercise with social interaction – training with friends or in clubs often improves adherence and makes physical activity easier to maintain. ^{118 119}

Additional health benefits

Beyond assisting with weight control and the vital preservation of bone mass, muscle mass, and physical function, staying active offers significant 'invisible' benefits that occur independently of the number on the scale.

Regular movement fundamentally improves insulin sensitivity, allowing your body to manage blood sugar more effectively, while simultaneously supporting cardiovascular and metabolic health by maintaining healthy blood pressure levels and reducing liver fat. ^{120 121}

Conclusion: a new chapter in health

Adopting a plant-forward diet while on GLP-1 therapy is more than a weight-loss strategy; it is a profound opportunity to support your health and build a sustainable foundation for the future. While the medication provides clinical support, the goal is to transition towards a lifestyle that eventually stands on its own, powered by the nourishing habits you are building today. By focusing on nutrient density, prioritising plant protein to protect your muscle mass, and staying mindful of hydration and fibre, you are not just eating less – you are eating better.

Success on this journey is found in consistency, not perfection. Use the tools in this guide to navigate your changing appetite with confidence, and always stay in close communication with your healthcare team to tailor these principles to your unique needs.

About ProVeg International

ProVeg International works to accelerate the transition to a sustainable global food system by making plant-rich foods and alternative proteins more accessible and appealing.

ProVeg has received the United Nations' Momentum for Change Award and works closely with key UN food and environment agencies. We have observer status with the UNFCCC, the IPCC, and the CBD, special consultative status with ECOSOC, and are accredited for UNEA.



Our Strategic Role in the GLP-1 Era

As GLP-1-driven dietary shifts intersect with the rise of plant-forward eating, ProVeg plays a vital role in aligning markets and policy with a shared vision of health and sustainability:

- **Corporate protein transition:** we support major food companies in adopting protein transition targets. We promote innovation in the development of nutrient-dense, plant-based products that meet the evolving needs of health-conscious consumers.
- **Public food programmes:** by partnering with schools, universities, and hospitals, we help expand access to appealing, plant-rich meals in public institutions – normalising healthier, more sustainable eating habits for all.

By working across corporate, institutional, and political spheres, ProVeg transforms emerging consumer trends into lasting systemic change, advancing both planetary and public health.

[Learn more at proveg.org](https://www.proveg.org)

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About this document

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