



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Semaglutide

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

### **Brand Names: US**

Ozempic (0.25 or 0.5 MG/DOSE); Ozempic (1 MG/DOSE); Rybelsus; Wegovy

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Ozempic (0.25 or 0.5 MG/DOSE); Ozempic (1 MG/DOSE); Rybelsus

### **Warning**

- This drug has been shown to cause thyroid cancer in some animals. It is not known if this happens in humans. If thyroid cancer happens, it may be deadly if not found and treated early. Call your doctor right away if you have a neck mass, trouble breathing, trouble swallowing, or have hoarseness that will not go away.
- Do not use this drug if you have a health problem called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2), or if you or a family member have had thyroid cancer.

## **What is this drug used for?**

### **Ozempic prefilled pens and Rybelsus tablets:**

- It is used to lower blood sugar in patients with high blood sugar (diabetes).

### **Ozempic prefilled pens:**

- It is used to lower the chance of heart attack, stroke, and death in some people.

### **Wegovy prefilled pens:**

- It is used to help with weight loss in certain people.

## **What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**

### **For all uses of this drug:**

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have ever had pancreatitis.
- If you have or have ever had depression or thoughts of suicide.
- If you are using another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

### **If using for high blood sugar:**

- If you have type 1 diabetes. Do not use this drug to treat type 1 diabetes.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

### **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

#### **For all uses of this drug:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Follow the diet and workout plan that your doctor told you about.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- Kidney problems have happened. Sometimes, these may need to be treated in the hospital or with dialysis.
- If you cannot drink liquids by mouth or if you have upset

stomach, throwing up, or diarrhea that does not go away; you need to avoid getting dehydrated. Contact your doctor to find out what to do. Dehydration may lead to new or worse kidney problems.

- Do not share pen or cartridge devices with another person even if the needle has been changed. Sharing these devices may pass infections from one person to another. This includes infections you may not know you have.
- If you are planning on getting pregnant, talk with your doctor. You may need to stop taking this drug at least 2 months before getting pregnant.

### **If using for high blood sugar:**

- Wear disease medical alert ID (identification).
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Do not drive if your blood sugar has been low. There is a greater chance of you having a crash.
- It may be harder to control blood sugar during times of stress such as fever, infection, injury, or surgery. A change in physical activity, exercise, or diet may also affect blood sugar.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

### **If using for weight loss:**

- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- Weight loss during pregnancy may cause harm to the unborn baby. If you get pregnant while taking this drug or if you want to get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

### **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

#### **For all uses of this drug:**

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of gallstones like sudden pain in the upper right belly area,

right shoulder area, or between the shoulder blades; yellow skin or eyes; or fever with chills.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- A fast heartbeat.
- Change in eyesight.
- Low blood sugar can happen. The chance may be raised when this drug is used with other drugs for diabetes. Signs may be dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy or weak, shaking, fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these signs. Follow what you have been told to do for low blood sugar. This may include taking glucose tablets, liquid glucose, or some fruit juices.
- Severe and sometimes deadly pancreas problems (pancreatitis) have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have severe stomach pain, severe back pain, or severe upset stomach or throwing up.

### **If using for weight loss:**

- New or worse behavior or mood changes like depression or thoughts of suicide.

### **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

## **If using for high blood sugar:**

- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.

## **Tablets:**

- Not hungry.

## **If using for weight loss:**

- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Headache.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Burping.
- Gas.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **Tablets:**

- Take at least 30 minutes before the first food, drink, or drugs of the day.
- Take with plain water only. Do not take with more than 4 ounces (120 mL) of water.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **Prefilled syringes or pen:**

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Take with or without food.
- Take the same day each week.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- Do not use if solution changes color.



- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

### **If using for high blood sugar:**

- Attach new needle before each dose.
- Take off the needle after each shot. Do not store this device with the needle on it.
- Put the cap back on after you are done using your dose.
- If you are also using insulin, you may inject this drug and the insulin in the same area of the body but not right next to each other.
- Do not mix this drug in the same syringe with insulin.

### **If using for weight loss:**

- Each container is for one use only. Use right after opening. Throw away any part of the opened container after the dose is given.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

### Tablets:

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

### Prefilled syringes or pen:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it and go back to your normal time.
- If it is less than 48 hours until your next dose, skip the missed and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses within 48 hours of each other.
- If you miss 2 doses, call your doctor.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

### Tablets:

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

### Prefilled syringes or pen:

- Store unopened pens in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.

### Ozempic prefilled pens:

- After opening, store in the refrigerator or at room

temperature. Throw away any part not used after 56 days.

- Protect from heat and light.

### **Wegovy prefilled pens:**

- You may store unopened containers at room temperature. If you store at room temperature, throw away any part not used after 28 days.
- Store in the original container to protect from light.

### **All products:**

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

### **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor,

nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

### **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine. The use of this information is governed by the Lexicomp End User License Agreement, available at

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## Last Reviewed Date

2021-06-15

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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Semaglutide - Last updated on October 14, 2021

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