

Is Ozempic Right for You?

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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An injectable prescription medication for adults with Type 2 diabetes is being hailed in Hollywood as a weight-loss drug, too.

Ozempic has been steadily in the headlines for months and became the butt of comedian Jimmy Kimmel at the 2023 Academy Awards when he joked, “When I look around this room I can’t help but wonder, ‘Is Ozempic right for me?’”

Ozempic’s website – and its advertising - says the medicine is used “along with diet and exercise to improve blood sugar” and that “you should ask your healthcare provider if Ozempic is right for you.” Rachel Fehl, an advanced practice registered nurse at OSF Weight Management, agrees. She also says to make sure the drug you might take for weight loss is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“There are a lot of telehealth companies doing weight loss right now. You may notice you can get semaglutide (Ozempic) online for a much cheaper price. It’s going to range (around) \$1,200 a month for the actual medication, but there are some pharmacies compounding it for much less. I would not recommend those compounded formulations, they’re not being regulated right now,” Fehl says.

Meta Rask, manager of the OSF Weight Management Center in Peoria, says the clinic focuses on healthy lifestyles, not trendy diets.

“We don’t focus on fad diets,” Rask says. “We truly focus on being healthy and meeting a patient’s needs where they’re at. We then help them figure out what disciplinary team is going to be able to help them meet those goals.”

While the OSF Weight Management Center sometimes does recommend a weight-loss drug alongside exercise and healthy eating, Rask says you need to work with the team to figure out a plan that works for you.

“We have nurses, we have a physician and we have registered dietitians and exercise physiologists,” Rask says. “They work together to meet patients one-on-one to do an assessment. They’re going to find out what that patient is looking for and what their barriers are.”

Fehl adds that everyone’s weight loss journey is different, and so is the response from OSF Weight Management providers.

“For some of our patients, we do utilize FDA-approved anti-obesity medications. Those do include some of the GLP-1 medications, similar to Ozempic, for the appropriate patient,” Fehl says.

Below are some tips if you are interested in beginning your weight loss journey.

1. Control carbohydrates: Specifically processed carbohydrates and caloric beverages. Just one can of regular soda contains more than the daily maximum amount of recommended sugar for men and women.
2. Prioritize protein: Try to include protein with all meals and snacks. Protein helps us to feel full faster and for longer and can also reduce post meal blood sugar spikes.
3. Schedule Sleep: Getting less than seven hours or more than nine hours of sleep can both contribute to weight gain.
4. Take a break: This applies both to doing activities that reduce stress as well as giving our body a break from food. Find a meditation or breathing exercise you can add to your day to reduce cortisol production that can stimulate fat storage. Try to incorporate a 12 hour overnight fast (unless you have a medical condition that would not allow this). This practice can reduce gastrointestinal symptoms as well as allow for more use of stored fats for fuel.
5. Request a Referral: Ask your primary care provider or other provider for a referral to OSF Weight Management if you need some help getting started. The center's goal is to help you change your lifestyle to one that allows you to reach your goals and improve overall health.