RURAL ROTHER PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

Information Leaflet for Private Weight Loss Injections

1 Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because a private healthcare provider has informed us that you are using weight loss injections under their supervision.

These medicines include:

Generic names	Brand names
Tirzepatide	Mounjaro
Semaglutide	Ozempic, Wegovy
Liraglutide	Nevolat, Saxenda

Although you are getting these medicines privately, as your NHS doctor, we want you to be safe and know some important facts about these medicines, including serious side effects, so that you can recognise them, and get help if needed.

These medicines should not be a quick fix to lose weight. They should be used with diet and exercise, alongside mental wellbeing support if needed, to maintain weight loss.

If you have any concerns or questions after reading this leaflet, please discuss with your private doctor. Before you start using these medicines, your private doctor should explain to you how these medicines work, how they should be stored and how to inject yourself with the medicines.

2 Who should not be having these medicines?

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. You should always provide full and honest medical information before starting treatment to ensure the medicine is safe and appropriate for you.

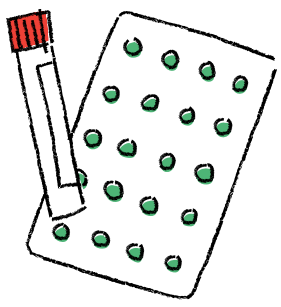
If you are already taking other medicines for your type 2 diabetes, you should not be using these injections without supervision from your regular GP as they can affect your blood sugar levels.

You should not be using these medicines if:

- You are under 18 or over 85 year old
- You are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning to get pregnant
- You have had eating disorders in the past
- You have type 1 diabetes mellitus
- You have severe stomach and digestive problems
- You have severe kidney/liver problems
- You have had recent bariatric surgery
- You had pancreatitis (your pancreas becomes inflamed/swollen) in the past
- You have allergies to semaglutide, liraglutide or tirzepatide, or other ingredients in these medicines
- You have BMI less than 27 kg/m² (or 30 kg/m² without weight-related health issues including heart problems, high blood pressure)
- You or a close family member have had certain thyroid cancers

3 Are there any interactions with my other medicines?

These medicines can affect how well your body takes in some medicines, like:



- Insulin
- Diabetes medicines (like gliclazide, glimepiride)
- Oral contraceptives (‘birth control pills’)
- Oral hormone replacement treatment (HRT)
- Thyroid medicines (levothyroxine)
- Digoxin

Your other medicines can become less effective or cause a higher risk of side effects, and may need more regular monitoring and blood tests, to make sure that they are working effectively for you.

Always speak to your doctor if you are unsure about starting a new medicine.

These medicines can also increase the chance of food or liquid getting into your lungs during surgery or other procedures.

You should tell all your healthcare providers that you are taking these medicines before you are scheduled to have surgery or other procedures.

4 Are they safe for my baby?

As your health and weight improve with these medicines, your fertility may also increase. This means some women—particularly those with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) or obesity—may become pregnant more easily, even if this wasn’t expected.

Currently, there is not enough safety data to know whether these medicines can cause harm to the baby, so you should not breastfeed or get pregnant when you are using these medicines.

These medicines can stay in the body even after you stopped using them, so you should use contraceptives during **and** after using these medicines to prevent pregnancy. You should stop these medicines at least 2 months before you try to get pregnant, but the time it takes the body to process medicines is not the same for everyone.

You should talk to your private doctor about your contraceptive options, such as using a condom, as your body may not absorb the oral contraceptives (‘birth control pills’) when you are using these medicines.

If you are using these medicines and think you might be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant, speak to your private doctor straight away.

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5 What are the side effects?

Side effects like **feeling sick (nausea), being sick (vomiting)**, **constipation**, **indigestion** and **diarrhoea** are quite common, especially when you are increasing the dose of your medicines.

This is normally mild, but it can sometimes cause **dehydration**, so you should drink plenty of fluids and tell your doctor if you have diarrhoea and sickness (vomiting) that does not go away. If you are taking other medicines, please speak to your private doctor for advice on **sick day rules**.

Muscle loss is also common, especially for older people, so it is important to do muscle strengthening or weight-bearing exercise several times a week while you are using these medicines.

People who have diabetes also have a higher risk of having **low blood sugar levels** (‘hypos’) and **eye problems**, so you should have regular eye checks and discuss your medicines with your private doctor.

In very rare cases, some people experience a problem with blood flow to the eyes. This is a rare side effect called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION) .

If you notice a change in your eyesight, such as sudden blindness or your eyesight gets worse very quickly in one or both of your eyes during treatment, you should go to an eye hospital or A&E immediately.

6 What is acute pancreatitis?

Acute pancreatitis is where the pancreas becomes inflamed (swollen) over a short period of time. It is a rare side effect, but it is important that you know the symptoms so that you can recognise it and get help urgently.

The main symptom is severe, constant pain in your stomach that travels to your back.

Other symptoms include:

- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- indigestion
- high temperature above 38°C (fever)
- yellowing in the whites of the eyes (jaundice)

If you notice these symptoms, stop using these medicines and go to A&E immediately.

You should not restart these medicines even after you recover from pancreatitis.

7 Anything else I should know?

Weight loss injections are prescribed medicines and should only be obtained from a registered healthcare provider after appropriate check-ups and consultations. Do not buy these medicines from beauty salons, social media, or other unregulated sellers. These sources may supply fake or unsafe products, which can cause serious harm.

Genuine weight loss injections are provided in pre-filled injection pens. If you are given a powder that needs to be mixed before injecting, this is not authorised and not safe for use.

Some counterfeit pens are made to look like real ones, so it can be hard to tell the difference. This is why it is important to only use trusted, regulated providers. Selling these medicines outside of regulated healthcare settings is also illegal.

If you think that your medicine is not genuine or if you have experienced side effects from the medicines, you should stop using the medicines and speak to your private doctor.

You should also report this to the Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency (**MHRA**) **Yellow Card scheme**, which helps to monitor the safety of medicines in the UK.

Remember!

- You should only buy your medicines from a registered pharmacy, instead of unregulated sellers, like beauty salons or via social media.
- These medicines should only be used under medical supervision and only be prescribed by a registered healthcare professional.
- Weight loss injections are designed to support—not replace—healthy lifestyle changes. For best results, you should use them alongside a balanced diet, regular exercise, and mental wellbeing support if needed.
- The safety and effectiveness of these medicines when used by people who do not meet the medical requirements has not been studied.
- You should have regular check-ins with your doctor to track your weight loss progress to make sure that your current dose is safe and effective.
- You should always discuss your concerns or questions about these medicines with your private doctor.
- If your injection pen is faulty or damaged, do not use it.
- You should not use any leftover medicine in the pen once your monthly course is complete, as it may not give you the correct dose.
- If you experience side effects, or think your pen may be faulty or not genuine, please report it to the MHRA Yellow Card Scheme. This helps keep medicines safe for everyone.

Created by Rachel Shee for Rural Rother PCN