

Ozempic Subcutaneous Injection for Off-Label Treatment of Obesity – Drug Shortage

OZEMPIC (SEMAGLUTIDE) PRE-FILLED PENS MARKETED IN CANADA

DIN	Dose Delivered	Manufacturer
02471477	0.25 mg, 0.5 mg	Novo Nordisk Canada Inc.
02471469	1 mg	

Status of semaglutide for treatment of obesity in Canada:

A subcutaneous semaglutide product (Wegovy) is approved for use in Canada for weight management but has not yet been marketed.¹ Many patients have been given Ozempic prescriptions due to lack of availability of Wegovy. This prescribing is outside the current Notice of Compliance for Ozempic.

Management Options

- Obesity is a complex medical condition that requires attention to factors other than pharmacotherapy that are not addressed here.

Therapeutic Alternatives for Weight Management

- Four medications are approved for use in Canada for weight management, but only 3 are currently marketed (see table).
- Several agents are used off-label but are not within the scope of this document.
- Consult the Obesity chapter in CPS: Therapeutic Choices and individual product monographs for dosing, contraindications/precautions, drug interactions and other considerations.
- Consult local drug benefits lists for coverage.

Characteristics of Agents for Weight Management ²			
Agent/ Administration	Weight Reduction at 1 Year ³	Adverse Effects	Comments
bupropion/ naltrexone <i>BID PO</i>	4.8% more than placebo	Nausea, vomiting, constipation, headache, dizziness, insomnia, dry mouth.	Avoid concurrent use of drugs that lower the seizure threshold. Minimize or avoid alcohol consumption. Avoid consumption with high-fat foods. Avoid in patients with uncontrolled hypertension, seizure disorder, severe hepatic impairment or end- stage renal failure.
liraglutide <i>once daily SC</i>	5.4% more than placebo	Nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea. Acute pancreatitis (rare). Severe hypoglycemia observed in patients with type 2 diabetes; adjustment of diabetes medications may be required.	Caution in patients with heart rhythm disturbances and severe renal impairment. Contraindicated in pregnancy and in those with a personal or family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma or multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2.

orlistat <i>BID PO</i>	2.9% more than placebo	Oily spotting, flatus with discharge, fecal urgency.	Contraindicated in patients with chronic malabsorption syndrome or cholestasis. Advise patients to supplement fat-soluble vitamins (multivitamin) daily ≥ 2 h before or after orlistat or at bedtime. Adverse effects make adherence difficult.
semaglutide <i>once weekly SC</i>	12.5% more than placebo	Approved for use in Canada for treatment of obesity as Wegovy, but not yet marketed. This has resulted in off-label use of Ozempic.	

References:

1. Health Canada; Novo Nordisk Canada Inc. *Ozempic* [product monograph]. Available from: <https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/info?lang=eng&code=96058>. Accessed August 18, 2023.
2. Sharma AM. *Obesity* [internet]. April 15, 2021. Available from: <https://cps.pharmacists.ca>. Subscription required. Accessed September 6, 2023.
3. Pedersen SD, Manjoo P, Wharton S. (October 21, 2022). *Canadian adult obesity clinical practice guidelines: pharmacotherapy for obesity management* [PDF file]. Available from: https://obesitycanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Pharmacotherapy-CPG-2022_final.pdf.