

Ozempic 1 mg Subcutaneous Injection for Off-Label Treatment of Obesity

Product	DIN	Manufacturer
Ozempic (semaglutide) pre-filled pen delivering doses of 1 mg	02471469	Novo Nordisk Canada Inc.

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 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.