

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) use for weight loss

Frequently Asked Questions for Patients

At the end of December 2024, a new weight loss drug called tirzepatide was [approved for use on the NHS](#) by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Tirzepatide, which is also known by the brand name *Mounjaro*®, can help to promote weight loss and is most effective when used alongside a calorie-controlled diet and a more active daily lifestyle.

Tirzepatide will first become available on NHS prescriptions from June 2025. However, the rollout of the treatment will be phased over several years. At first, only those patients who meet specific eligibility criteria will have access. Over time, the criteria may be widened to offer more patients the treatment.

For now, we ask that you do not contact your GP surgery to try and obtain tirzepatide for weight loss. We have asked our GPs not to prescribe tirzepatide for weight loss just yet, while we work with clinical colleagues to develop options for new local services that will prescribe tirzepatide with the right support in place for patients, by the summer.

We hope the following FAQs are helpful. We will update these FAQs as more information about access to tirzepatide becomes available.

What is changing in the management of obesity in England through the NHS as a result of NICE's announcement?

- People aged 18 and over who are living with obesity and another weight-related health issue will have NHS access to tirzepatide through specialist weight management services (SWMS) from spring 2025 or through primary care from summer 2025.
- Anyone prescribed tirzepatide must participate in 'wraparound' care required by NICE guidance. This focuses on diet, nutrition and increasing physical activity. NHS England will soon provide more details of the wraparound support offer for patients who qualify.
- Tirzepatide is currently prescribed for the treatment of type 2 diabetes but will now also be available for weight loss purposes.

Who will be able to access tirzepatide?

- People who have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or over and a weight-related health problem; or a BMI of 32.5 and one weight-related health problem for people from South

Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds, as they are at a higher risk of medical problems at a lower BMI.

- NHS England will soon confirm which weight-related health problems will benefit the most from tirzepatide and which people will be eligible for consideration for tirzepatide.
- People cannot be prescribed tirzepatide if they do not wish to undertake the wraparound care support.

Can I access tirzepatide straight away?

- We know there are many eligible people who would like access as soon as possible but tirzepatide will not immediately be available to everyone who wishes to use it.
- Tirzepatide will initially be offered to individuals facing the most significant health risks related to their weight, starting in spring 2025 through SWMS. This will include prioritising people already receiving care in SWMS. Clarity on patient prioritisation is expected from NHS England very soon.
- Introducing this new treatment to NICE's estimated 3.4 million eligible patients requires the NHS to use a 'staged approach' to develop completely new services in primary care.

What is a staged approach?

- A staged approach to service rollout within primary care means the NHS will manage the flow of eligible people over several years so the NHS is not overwhelmed.
- Many healthcare professionals (HCPs) will need to be trained to ensure the safe prescribing of tirzepatide and provide appropriate, effective wraparound support.
- This approach will mean the service is delivered safely and that the NHS can plan for increased demand, whilst building specific skills and knowledge within the workforce.
- NICE will evaluate the delivery of tirzepatide over the next 3 years to inform further guidance around whether access to tirzepatide can be expanded rapidly by the NHS.

How does tirzepatide work for weight loss?

- Tirzepatide targets areas of the brain that control hunger. It decreases appetite and slows the movement of food through the body, so you feel fuller for longer.

- Clinical trials show tirzepatide can help people living with obesity lose up to 20% of their starting body weight, depending on dose and accompanying diet and lifestyle support.
- Tirzepatide comes as an injection, which can be self-administered once a week.

What if I already receive tirzepatide treatment?

- You can continue receiving tirzepatide if it is prescribed to manage diabetes.
- If you use tirzepatide acquired privately for weight loss, you may be able to access it on an NHS prescription in the future if you meet qualifying criteria. More information is expected soon.

Will everyone who is eligible have access to the drug?

- Tirzepatide might not be suitable for everyone and not everyone who meets the eligibility criteria will want to use it for weight loss. An HCP will discuss the most appropriate care and support, based on your individual needs. This could include behavioural support programmes, prescription medicines or bariatric surgery.
- If you are currently on a waiting list for NHS SWMS, an HCP will determine if it will be appropriate for you to receive tirzepatide as part of your care in a different care setting (for example, through primary care).

Will there be a cost for being prescribed tirzepatide?

- Normal prescription charges will apply unless you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions (for example, because you have a medical exemption certificate).