

Participant Guide

Maximizing GLP-1 Benefits through Healthy Living



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Overview

In this module, you'll learn how healthy habits can make your GLP-1 medication work better. While the medication is important for your health, making small changes to your daily routine can boost its effects.

You'll discover how eating nutritious foods, staying active, getting enough sleep, and managing stress can help your treatment. Following these habits not only improves how the medication works but also helps prevent gaining weight back after treatment.



The Risks of Relying Solely on GLP-1

If you are using or thinking about using GLP-1 medications for weight loss, it's important to know the risks of depending only on the medicine. Let's go over some of the risks of relying just on GLP-1 medications.

Muscle Loss

One big concern is losing muscle. If you don't include strength training or regular exercise in your routine, the weight you lose with GLP-1 could cause a drop in muscle mass. Losing muscle can affect your health in many ways such as:



- **Slower Metabolism:** Muscle helps burn more calories, even when you're resting. So, losing muscle can slow down your metabolism, making it easier to regain weight after losing it, especially if you don't build healthy habits.
- **Weaker Bones:** Strong muscles help keep your bones strong. If you lose muscle, it can lead to weaker bones, increasing the chance of conditions like osteoporosis or broken bones.
- **Lower Insulin Sensitivity:** GLP-1 medications help improve how your body uses insulin and controls blood sugar. But losing muscle can still cause problems because muscle is important for processing sugar in the body. Keeping your muscles strong through exercise and eating right helps your body stay healthy and lowers the risk of diabetes.
- **Higher Risk of Disease:** Losing muscle increases the chances of getting long-term diseases like heart disease or diabetes. Less muscle can make it harder for your body to control blood sugar and cholesterol, leading to serious health issues.

The Risks of Relying Solely on GLP-1

Regaining Weight

When using GLP-1 medications, it's important to understand the risk of gaining weight back if you don't build healthy habits. While these medications can help control your appetite and help you lose weight, they can't replace the changes needed for long-term success. If you rely only on the medication, you might not be ready to handle the challenge of keeping the weight off.

Think about this: once you stop taking GLP-1, its appetite-reducing effects will wear off. Without healthy eating and regular exercise, it's easy to fall back into old habits. This can make it harder to keep the weight off, causing frustration and disappointment, which might hurt your confidence and motivation.

Nutritional Gaps

Depending only on medication and skipping healthy eating can lead to missing important nutrients, which might leave you tired, low on energy, and affect your mood. Instead of eating processed or convenience foods, think of this as a chance to give your body the vitamins, minerals, and protein it needs. Healthy eating not only improves how you feel but also helps you stay on track for lasting health.

Cancer Risk

A diet without enough good nutrients can increase inflammation and affect your metabolism, both of which are linked to a higher cancer risk. By choosing whole, nutritious foods, you give your body the protective compounds that can fight cancer. Making smart food choices strengthens your body and helps you take charge of your health.



Exercise is Key

While GLP-1 medications can help with weight loss and improve your health, exercise is super important to get the best results. GLP-1s help control your appetite and weight, but without regular exercise, you could miss out on important benefits like keeping your muscles strong, boosting your metabolism, and improving your overall fitness.

Exercise helps keep your muscles strong, which is really important when you're trying to lose weight. This helps prevent losing muscle and keeps your metabolism working well. Both strength training (like lifting weights) and cardio exercises (like running or biking) are important for improving how your body uses insulin, lowering blood pressure, and keeping your heart healthy. These things are all necessary for doing well with GLP-1 medications. Plus, exercising regularly can make you feel happier and give you more energy, which helps you stay motivated and focused on your health goals.



By using GLP-1 medication along with a regular exercise routine, you can create a strong base for keeping the weight off and staying healthy. Keep in mind that even small activities, like walking or doing light strength exercises, can make a big difference in reaching your long-term goals.

Making GLP-1 Work Better with Healthy Eating



To really get the most out of GLP-1 medications, good nutrition is very important. While GLP-1s can help with weight loss, they don't replace the need to eat the right foods. By focusing on a balanced diet filled with healthy foods, you can improve your results and feel better both mentally and physically.

Think of it this way: the foods you choose to eat aren't just fuel—they're your body's building blocks.

By choosing whole, nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats, you're not only helping with weight loss but also giving your body what it needs to stay healthy. These foods help prevent nutrient gaps that can drain your energy and affect your mood, so you feel strong, focused, and motivated. Plus, they have important nutrients that can reduce inflammation and improve your metabolism, which helps protect against long-term health problems like heart disease and cancer.

Also, eating well helps protect your muscles while you lose weight, keeping your metabolism healthy and active. This means that the healthy choices you make today are like investments in your future health, helping you keep your progress even after the medication ends.

When you see nutrition as a way to take charge of your health, it makes you feel empowered. It's not just about losing weight; it's about creating a lifestyle that helps you feel your best now and in the future.



Maximizing and Maintaining Weight Loss

To manage your weight for the long term, it's important to build a strong foundation based on a long-term mindset, healthy habits, and keeping track of your progress. By focusing on creating enjoyable and sustainable habits and checking in on your progress regularly, you can boost the benefits of your GLP-1 medication and set yourself up for continued success in keeping the weight off.



Long-Term Mindset: It's important to have a long-term mindset for keeping weight off for good. Think of your weight loss journey as a lifelong promise to yourself for better health, not just a short-term goal. By focusing on making lasting changes instead of quick fixes, you can create a healthier future. Remember, setbacks are a normal part of the journey, and with patience and determination, you can achieve lasting success!

Sustainable Habits: Creating habits you can stick with is important for keeping the weight off after you stop taking medication. Focus on adding healthy eating and regular exercise into your daily life in ways that you really enjoy. Try out new recipes or find fun physical activities that you like! By making a balanced meal plan with a variety of nutrient-rich foods, you'll not only keep things interesting but also nourish your body.

Maximizing and Maintaining Weight Loss

Monitoring and Accountability: Keeping track of your progress is important for your success. Think about using a food diary or apps to monitor what you eat and how much you exercise—this will help you stay on track with your goals and be more aware of your habits. Being mindful of your eating can help you notice patterns and triggers that might cause you to overeat. Also, regularly checking your progress and getting support from friends, family, or support groups can motivate you to keep going.

By adding these practices to your daily life, you not only maximize the benefits of GLP-1 medication but also create a healthier and more balanced lifestyle that lasts. Remember, this journey is about making progress, not being perfect. Celebrate your successes, learn from any setbacks, and stay focused on your goals!



Amelia's Story

Amelia had always had a hard time with her weight. She tried every diet and quick fix, but the pounds always came back. When her doctor prescribed GLP-1 for weight loss, she felt hopeful but also knew it wouldn't be a magic solution. If she wanted to see lasting change, she would have to put in the effort herself.

Six months into the treatment, Amelia had seen great results on the scale. But this time, she wasn't just focused on the numbers. Every morning, she made sure to include exercise in her day. What started as short walks turned into jogging intervals and then strength training. Each workout made her feel more in control of her body—stronger, healthier, and more capable. The weight loss was only one part of her transformation; feeling confident in her growing strength was just as rewarding.

Her eating habits shifted, too. She no longer viewed food as something to restrict or indulge in, but as fuel for her new lifestyle. She filled her plate with lean proteins, fresh vegetables, and whole grains, enjoying meals that not only satisfied her hunger but energized her workouts. It wasn't about deprivation; it was about balance.



Amelia used GLP-1 to kickstart her weight loss, but she focused on regular exercise and healthy eating to create lasting habits. She wanted to ensure her success would continue even after she stopped taking the medication.

Amelia's Story (continued...)



Now, let's discuss...

How do you think about food and exercise—are they just for reaching short-term goals, or could they be part of a long-term lifestyle change for you?

In your own experience, how could adding exercise and healthy eating, like Amelia did, help you reach more lasting weight loss or health goals?

Summary

You can boost the effects of your GLP-1 medication and lower the chance of gaining weight back after treatment by sticking to important lifestyle changes. Healthy habits like eating a balanced diet, staying active, and managing stress will not only improve your results now but help keep them in the long run.

Remember, real change takes time. Stay focused, keep moving forward, and be patient with yourself. The effort you put in today will lead to lasting results, and you have what it takes to take control of your health and reach your goals!



Keep Moving

If you're just starting out with exercise, the key is to **start small and build gradually**. A great tip is to begin with short, manageable sessions, like 10-15 minutes of walking or light activity, and then gradually increase the duration and intensity as you feel more comfortable.

"Success doesn't come from what you do occasionally, it comes from what you do consistently."

— Marie Forleo



Summary

Activities

- Complete the attached "Self-Check: worksheet to assess your current habits in areas like exercise, nutrition, and stress management. Pick one area to focus on improving.
- Create 2-3 goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to help you improve your physical activity or nutrition over the next month.
- **Goal Setting:** Set one goal related to this session. For example: "I will cook at least three healthy meals at home each week for the next month, using a variety of nutritious ingredients. I will track my progress in a meal planner to help stay on track."

Discussion/Questions

- Have you ever used a certain tool or method to lose weight? How could focusing on long-term habits help you keep the weight off after you stop using that tool?
- What can you do today to make sure any weight loss or health improvements you're seeing now will last, even after you've reached your goal or stopped taking GLP-1 medications?

Self-Check Worksheet: Reviewing Your Daily Habits (Page 1)

Instructions: Reflect on your current lifestyle habits regarding exercise, nutrition, and stress management. Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and then use the space provided to jot down thoughts or areas for improvement.

Section 1: Physical Activity

1. I engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____
2. I include strength training exercises at least two days a week.
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____
3. I incorporate movement into my daily routine (e.g., taking the stairs, walking during breaks).
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____

Section 2: Nutrition

4. I eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____
5. I pay attention to portion sizes and listen to my hunger cues.
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____
6. I stay hydrated by drinking enough water throughout the day.
Rating: __ / 5
Notes: _____

Self-Check Worksheet: Reviewing Your Daily Habits (Page 2)

Section 3: Stress Management

7. I have healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress (e.g., exercise, meditation, hobbies).

Rating: __ / 5

Notes: _____

8. I set aside time for self-care activities regularly.

Rating: __ / 5

Notes: _____

9. I prioritize sleep and aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

Rating: __ / 5

Notes: _____

Reflection

1. What area(s) do you feel most confident in?
2. What area(s) would you like to improve?
3. What specific actions will you take to enhance your habits in the areas you want to improve?

Remember, self-assessment is a valuable tool for personal growth. Use your reflections to set goals and make meaningful changes in your lifestyle!

Goal Setting Worksheet (Page 1)

This worksheet will help you set SMART goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. You will also create action steps and think about possible challenges to help you succeed on your journey.



1. Identify Your Goal: What is the specific outcome you want to achieve in terms of nutrition and/or exercise?
(Example: "I want to eat more vegetables" or "I want to run 3 times a week.")

2. Make it SMART (*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound*)

Specific: What exactly do you want to accomplish?

(Example: "I will increase my vegetable intake by eating at least 3 servings per day.")

My Specific Goal:

Measurable: How will you track your progress? What metrics will you use?

(Example: "I will track my servings of vegetables using a food journal.")

My Measurable Criteria:

Achievable: Is this goal realistic for you right now?

(Example: "I currently eat 1 serving per day, so increasing to 3 servings feels realistic.")

My Actionable Plan:

Goal Setting Worksheet (Page 2)

Relevant: How does this goal align with your overall wellness objectives?
(Example: "Eating more vegetables will improve my energy levels and support my health goals.")

Why This Goal Matters:

Time-bound: What is your deadline to achieve this goal?
(Example: "I will meet this goal by the end of 8 weeks.")

My Timeline:

3. Action Steps: List 3–5 small, actionable steps you can take to reach your goal.
Example:

1. Buy vegetables during my weekly grocery trip.
2. Add a serving of vegetables to lunch each day.
3. Try a new vegetable recipe once a week.)

My Action Steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. Potential Obstacles: What challenges might prevent you from achieving your goal? How can you overcome them? (Example: "I might forget to buy vegetables—so I'll write a list to take shopping with me.")

Potential Obstacles and Solutions:

1. Obstacle: _____
Solution: _____
2. Obstacle: _____
Solution: _____

Sustainable Habits Checklist (Page 1)

Building long-term healthy habits is the key to sustainable weight management and overall well-being. Use this checklist to incorporate simple, manageable changes into your daily routine.

Tip: Choose just 2–3 habits to start with, and gradually add more as they become part of your routine. Sustainable change happens with consistency over time.

Nutrition Habits

- ☐ **Eat More Vegetables:** Add at least one extra serving of vegetables to lunch or dinner.
- ☐ **Choose Whole Grains:** Swap refined grains (white bread, pasta) for whole grains (quinoa, brown rice).
- ☐ **Eat Mindfully:** Take time to eat slowly and savor your food without distractions.
- ☐ **Portion Control:** Use smaller plates or bowls to help manage portion sizes.
- ☐ **Hydrate Regularly:** Aim for at least 8 cups of water a day. Add lemon or cucumber for flavor.
- ☐ **Limit Sugary Drinks:** Replace soda or sweetened drinks with sparkling water or herbal tea.
- ☐ **Prepare Healthy Snacks:** Keep fruits, nuts, or yogurt on hand to prevent unhealthy snacking.
- ☐ **Plan Meals Ahead:** Prepare meals in advance to avoid impulse eating or ordering takeout.
- ☐ **Stop Eating When Satisfied:** Learn to recognize hunger and fullness cues to avoid overeating.

Exercise Habits

- ☐ **Take the Stairs:** Opt for the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible.
- ☐ **Walk More:** Add 10–15 minutes of walking to your daily routine, or park further away from your destination.
- ☐ **Stretch Daily:** Take 5 minutes to stretch in the morning or evening to improve flexibility.
- ☐ **Incorporate Strength Training:** Aim to do bodyweight exercises like squats, lunges, or push-ups a few times a week.
- ☐ **Use a Fitness App:** Track your daily steps and activity levels using a fitness app or pedometer.
- ☐ **Schedule Active Breaks:** If you sit for long periods, take breaks for movement every 30–60 minutes.
- ☐ **Plan Short Workouts:** Even a 10-minute workout counts—focus on consistency rather than duration.

Sustainable Habits Checklist (Page 2)

Sleep

- ☐ **Establish a Bedtime Routine:** Wind down with a consistent, relaxing routine before bed (reading, stretching, or listening to calming music).
- ☐ **Go to Bed at the Same Time:** Aim to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- ☐ **Create a Relaxing Sleep Environment:** Keep your room cool, dark, and quiet. Use blackout curtains, earplugs, or a white noise machine if needed.
- ☐ **Power Down Screens:** Turn off electronics (phones, computers, TVs) at least 30 minutes before bed to reduce blue light exposure.
- ☐ **Practice a Relaxation Technique:** Try deep breathing, meditation, or gentle stretching before bed to help calm your mind.

Stress Management

- ☐ **Take Short Mindfulness Breaks:** Pause for a few minutes each day to breathe deeply or practice mindfulness to relieve stress.
- ☐ **Schedule "Me Time":** Dedicate at least 10–15 minutes each day to doing something you enjoy—whether it's reading, journaling, or walking.
- ☐ **Declutter Your Space:** Organize your surroundings to reduce visual clutter and create a calming environment.
- ☐ **Engage in Physical Activity:** Exercise is a great way to manage stress and release tension.
- ☐ **Take Nature Breaks:** Spend time outdoors, in nature, to help reduce stress and boost your mood.
- ☐ **Practice Positive Self-Talk:** Be mindful of your inner dialogue and practice being kind to yourself.