Pharmacy Pearls

February 2026

Newest kid on the block for treatment of Obesity: Oral semaglutide (Wegovy® Pill)

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Semaglutide

MOA: GLP-1 receptor agonist that ↑'s glucose-dependent insulin secretion, ↓'s inappropriate glucagon secretion, and slows gastric emptying

- **Indications and formulations:**
  - T2DM/CV risk reduction*: Ozempic® once weekly injection, Rybelsus® once daily oral pill
  - Obesity/CV risk reduction: Wegovy® once weekly injection, Wegovy® once daily oral pill
- **Contraindications:** Personal or family history of medullary thyroid cancer or multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2. Known hypersensitivity to semaglutide or any excipients in any semaglutide formulation

*If patient has T2DM, it is recommended to prescribe these formulations to ensure insurance coverage

Wegovy® Injection

Products/Dosing: 0.25mg, 0.5mg, 1mg, 1.7mg, 2.4mg
*7.2mg weekly dose may be approved in the near future

Administration: Inject subcutaneously into the abdomen, thigh, or upper arm once weekly, without regard to meals

Wegovy Pill®

Products/Dosing: 1.5mg, 4mg, 9mg, 25mg tablets

- Starting dose: Wegovy® 1.5mg tablet once daily
- Titrate dose every 30 days
- Maintenance dose: 25 mg orally once daily
  - Lower doses have not been studied/are not approved for use as maintenance

Administration: Take one tablet PO once daily on an empty stomach in the morning with water (up to 4 ounces). Wait at least 30 minutes before eating, drinking, or taking other oral medications. Swallow tablets whole. Do not split, crush, chew or dissolve.

Landmark Trials: Oral Semaglutide for the Treatment of Overweight and Obesity

Study	Comparators	Patient Population	Duration	Outcomes	Discontinuation due to AEs
OASIS-1	semaglutide 50mg vs. placebo	BMI ≥ 30 OR ≥ 27 kg/m^2 with ≥ 1 weight-related comorbidity, no DM	68 weeks	Mean bodyweight change from baseline (kg): -15.1% semaglutide vs. -2.4% placebo	6% semaglutide vs. 4% placebo (mostly GI-related)
OASIS-4	semaglutide 25mg vs. placebo	BMI ≥ 30 OR ≥ 27 kg/m^2 with ≥1 weight-related comorbidity, no DM	64 weeks	Mean bodyweight change from baseline (kg): -13.6% semaglutide vs. -2.2% placebo	6.9% semaglutide vs. 5.9% placebo (mostly GI-related)
SELECT	semaglutide 2.4 mg weekly* vs. placebo	BMI ≥27 kg/m^2 with established CVD, no DM	40 months	Incidence of MACE 6.5% vs. 8% placebo	16.6% semaglutide vs. 8.2% placebo (mostly GI-related)

*considered comparable to 25 mg of oral semaglutide

Clinical Considerations – Wegovy® Pill:

- Converting between oral and injectable Wegovy:
  - **Wegovy® 2.4mg SQ** weekly injection = **Wegovy® 25mg oral** once daily tablet
  - Convert when due for next dose, if patient does not tolerate higher dose of original agent, may switch to lower dose of new agent
- Along with GI side effects, 4.9% of patients taking Wegovy® pill reported skin sensitivities/paresthesias not seen with injectable formulation
- If history of bariatric surgery, use injectable Wegovy® for improved efficacy (Wegovy® pill has low bioavailability due to ↓'d absorption)
- **Relevant drug-drug interactions:**
  - Wegovy® pill 25mg and levothyroxine: 33% increase in serum concentration of levothyroxine → monitor TSH every 4 to 6 weeks and adjust levothyroxine dose accordingly
  - Wegovy® pill and oral contraceptives: When Wegovy® is at steady state, no impact on effectiveness of OC. Unknown risk of decreased effectiveness of OC's when titrating doses of semaglutide → counsel on risk and recommend additional form of contraception (barrier)

Medication Access:

- Most commercial insurance plans will require a PA (requirements vary by specific plan). If approved, could pay $25/month with coupon
- Medicare covers for patients with obesity and established CV disease*
- Medicaid covers for patients with obesity (Medicaid-specific criteria = BMI >40 kg/m^2) and established CV disease*
- Self-pay# – only available through NovoCare: $149 per month (1.5mg), $199 per month (4mg), $299 per month (9mg and 25mg tablets)

*Established CVD = prior MI, stroke, or symptomatic PAD, #This pricing is only until April 15, 2026 per Novo Nordisk; Wegovy® injection also available through NovoCare program