

Nutrition & Incretin Medications

What are incretin medications?

Incretin medications (incretins) act like or boost the incretin hormones made by the body to manage appetite and blood sugar.

Incretins are used to treat diabetes, support weight management, and may be used for other conditions.

Examples: Semaglutide (Ozempic®, Rybelsus®, Wegovy®) and Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®, Zepbound®).

Incretin medicines:

- Slow digestion and increase feelings of fullness which may reduce appetite and hunger.
- May cause changes in cravings and taste, which may affect food choices.

Eating & incretin medicines

Eating enough food and drinks can help prevent muscle loss and help you get enough nutrition.

- Stop eating when you feel full to avoid heartburn or feeling bloated.
- You may feel less hungry and eat less, but you need to eat enough to stay healthy.
- You may need to plan times to eat small meals and snacks. Try setting alarms.

Work with your dietitian or healthcare provider to discuss your nutrition needs and manage side effects.

Choose nutritious foods

- **Protein foods.** Help maintain muscles. Muscles keep you strong and help your body use blood sugar.

Choose protein foods at every meal and snack. Include beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, tofu, eggs, cottage cheese, Greek or Icelandic (skyr) yogurt, kefir, milk, lean meats and poultry, fish and shellfish.

Talk with your dietitian or healthcare provider about how much protein to eat.
- **Vegetables and fruit.** Provide fibre, vitamins and minerals. Add vegetables and fruit to every meal. Choose a variety like carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, leafy greens, apples, berries, citrus fruits, and pears.
- **Whole grain foods.** Pick grains with fibre like barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, and whole grain bread.
- **Unsaturated fats.** Choose healthy fats like avocados, canola and olive oil, and nuts, which help with overall health.



Speak to your healthcare provider if you:

have low appetite,
eat very little or skip meals,
are feeling tired,
or your energy is low.

Tips to manage side effects

Incretin medicines may cause side effects such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, acid reflux (heartburn), or constipation. Most side effects will go away within a month or two. They may return briefly when you increase the dose.

Try these tips to help manage side effects:

- **Eat and drink slowly.** Chew food well to help with digestion.
- **Eat smaller meals more often.** This can help prevent nausea or acid reflux.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Fluids help to prevent constipation and dehydration. Try drinking fluids between meals to help prevent feeling too full at mealtimes.
- **Increase fibre intake slowly.** Fibre can help with digestion and manage constipation.
- **Avoid high fat, greasy, or spicy foods.** These foods may irritate your stomach and make nausea, acid reflux, and indigestion worse.
- **Limit alcohol, caffeine, fizzy (carbonated) drinks, chocolate, peppermint, tomato.** These may lead to acid reflux and discomfort.
- **Stay upright after meals and snacks.** This may help reduce nausea and acid reflux after eating.



If side effects are severe or hard to manage, follow up with your healthcare provider or call Health Link at 811.

Exercise & incretin medicines

Exercise helps:

- **Keep muscles and bones strong:** Strength (resistance) train major muscle groups at least twice per week.
- **Improve blood sugars:** Incretins combined with exercise can result in even better blood sugar management.
- **Increase overall health:** Exercise can help your quality of life, physical ability, and help you feel stronger and healthier over time.

For more information



Talk to your healthcare team.

Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.

- Visit ahs.ca/nutritionhandouts and search:
 - Foods with Protein
 - Managing Nausea and Vomiting
 - Managing Constipation
 - Acid Reflux
 - Foods with Fibre
- Go to Diabetes.ca and search: [Resistance exercise videos](#), [Resistance exercise](#)
- 211 Alberta. Free and confidential services. Provides information on community services, food hampers, and free or low-cost meals.
 - Dial 211 or Text INFO to 211
 - Visit www.ab.211.ca and click “live chat”

