

Foods to Avoid on GLP-1 Medications

A Pharmacist's Printable Reference Card

For patients on Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, Zepbound, or Foundayo. Print it. Keep it on your fridge. Share with your family.

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How to Use This Card

GLP-1 medications work exceptionally well for weight loss — but what you eat during treatment either amplifies their effect or sabotages it. Certain foods dramatically worsen nausea, trigger reflux, cause bloating, or stall weight loss by interfering with the medication's appetite-regulation effects.

This reference card is designed to be **printed, folded, and kept somewhere visible** — on your fridge, in your wallet, or on your phone. It covers the foods to avoid, the better alternatives, and the pharmacist's rationale for each one.

Why Your Food Choices Matter More Now

GLP-1s slow gastric emptying by 50-70%. Food sits in your stomach much longer than before — making high-fat, greasy, or spicy foods cause extended nausea.

Blood sugar fluctuations compound side effects. Sugary drinks and refined carbs cause rapid spikes and crashes that worsen fatigue, hunger rebounds, and medication effectiveness.

Alcohol creates compounding risk. Hypoglycemia, dehydration, and nausea all intensify when GLP-1 medications are combined with alcohol — especially during dose escalation.

What you avoid is as important as what you eat. Even a perfect meal plan fails if trigger foods persist in the diet. This card is your 'what to skip' guide.

Pharmacist's Perspective — Faryal Faisal, PharmD

In clinical practice, I see the same pattern repeatedly: patients who struggle with GLP-1 side effects are usually those still eating foods that fight the medication. Patients who adjust their diet report fewer side effects, better weight loss, and significantly higher medication adherence long-term.

The Top 10 Foods to Avoid

These are the highest-impact foods to eliminate first. If you can only cut a few things, start here.

#	Food	Why Avoid
1	Fried foods (fries, fried chicken, donuts)	High fat + slow gastric emptying = extended nausea. #1 trigger for GLP-1 side effects.
2	Sugary drinks (soda, juice, sweetened tea)	Rapid blood sugar spikes defeat appetite control. Empty calories that don't satisfy.
3	Alcohol (beer, wine, spirits)	Increases nausea, dehydration, and hypoglycemia risk. Especially bad in first 3 months.
4	Carbonated beverages (sodas, sparkling water)	Gas worsens bloating and reflux — both common on GLP-1s.
5	Very spicy foods (hot sauce, chili, curry heavy)	Trigger reflux and stomach discomfort during dose escalations.
6	Refined carbs (white bread, pastries, white pasta)	Cause hunger rebounds; displace protein needed for muscle preservation.
7	High-fat dairy (whole milk, cream, butter-heavy)	Worsens nausea; delayed gastric emptying extends discomfort.
8	Processed meats (hot dogs, bacon, sausages)	High fat + sodium + preservatives trigger GI side effects.
9	Fast food (burgers, pizza, Chinese takeout)	Combines fried + high-fat + high-sodium — compound side effect trigger.
10	Ultra-processed snacks (chips, cookies, candy)	Zero nutritional value; cause fatigue and sugar crashes.

What to Eat Instead

For every food you remove, there's a better option. Use this swap table for grocery planning.

Category	■ Avoid	■ Eat Instead
Protein	Fried chicken, bacon, sausages, hot dogs	Grilled chicken breast, baked fish, Greek yogurt, eggs, cottage cheese
Carbs	White bread, pastries, white pasta, white rice	Oats, quinoa, brown rice, sweet potato, whole-grain bread (small portions)
Fats	Butter, lard, vegetable oils (soybean, corn)	Olive oil, avocado (small amounts), nuts (portioned)
Vegetables	Deep-fried vegetables, creamy casseroles	Leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, bell peppers (steamed or roasted)
Fruits	Fruit juices, dried fruits with sugar, canned in syrup	Berries, apples, pears, oranges (whole fruit, not juice)
Snacks	Chips, cookies, candy, pastries	Nuts ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup), Greek yogurt, hummus + vegetables, hard-boiled eggs
Beverages	Soda, juice, sweetened tea/coffee, energy drinks	Water, herbal tea, ginger tea (nausea helper), sparkling water with lemon
Dairy	Whole milk, cream, full-fat cheese, ice cream	Low-fat Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, unsweetened almond/oat milk
Condiments	Mayo, ranch, creamy dressings, sweet sauces	Olive oil + vinegar, mustard, salsa, lemon juice

Which Foods Trigger Which Side Effect?

If you're experiencing a specific side effect, these are the foods most likely contributing.

If You Have Nausea or Vomiting

Primary triggers: Fried foods, high-fat meals, greasy takeout, large portions, strong smells (fish, garlic, coffee for some), spicy foods, very hot foods, carbonated beverages, alcohol.

What helps instead: Bland proteins (plain Greek yogurt, boiled eggs, poached chicken), ginger tea between meals, crackers, cold or room-temperature foods, small frequent meals rather than large ones.

If You Have Constipation

Primary triggers: Low fiber intake, dehydration, processed foods, refined carbs, excess cheese and dairy, red meat heavy diet, insufficient magnesium.

What helps instead: 2-3 liters water daily, 2 tbsp ground chia or flax seeds daily, pears, prunes, kiwi (all high soluble fiber), berries, leafy greens, oatmeal, walking after meals.

If You Have Reflux or Heartburn

Primary triggers: Spicy foods, tomatoes, citrus, chocolate, mint, caffeine, carbonated drinks, alcohol, fried foods, large meals eaten late at night.

What helps instead: Smaller meals, eating at least 3 hours before lying down, lean proteins, non-citrus fruits (bananas, melons), oatmeal, ginger, turmeric tea.

If You Have Fatigue

Primary triggers: Insufficient protein, under-eating, high-sugar foods causing crashes, refined carbs, dehydration, insufficient B vitamins and iron (common in restrictive eating).

What helps instead: Consistent protein intake (25-30g per meal), complex carbs with each meal, adequate hydration, iron-rich foods (lean beef, spinach, lentils), consider a B-complex supplement if under-eating.

Quick Reference: Daily Checklist

Print this page and keep it visible. Check off daily to build the habit.

✓	DO: Protein at every meal (25-30g minimum)
✓	DO: 2.5-3 liters of water daily
✓	DO: Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables
✓	DO: Eat slowly — stop at 80% full
✓	DO: Add 2 tbsp chia or flax seeds (prevents constipation)
✗	AVOID: Fried foods and greasy takeout
✗	AVOID: Sugary drinks and juice
✗	AVOID: Alcohol (especially first 3 months)
✗	AVOID: Carbonated beverages
✗	AVOID: Very spicy or very hot temperature foods

When to Call Your Doctor

Contact your prescriber immediately if you experience: Severe abdominal pain radiating to your back (possible pancreatitis), persistent vomiting for more than 24 hours, signs of dehydration (dizziness, dark urine, rapid heart rate), or vision changes. These require prompt medical evaluation.

About the Author

Faryal Faisal, PharmD is a licensed pharmacist and the lead medical writer for Start Being Healthy. She holds a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Karachi (2022) and has clinical experience at Dr. Ziauddin Hospital, Karachi Institute of Kidney Diseases, and MSQ Academy. She currently contributes to Klarity Health. Her areas of expertise include GLP-1 receptor agonists, medication safety, and evidence-based nutrition for metabolic conditions.

Medical Disclaimer

This reference card is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your prescriber before changing your diet, especially if you have diabetes, kidney disease, or other chronic conditions. Individual nutritional needs vary.

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