

Protect yourself from fake weight loss and diabetes drugs

Certain prescription drugs are in high demand for weight loss. These drugs are called glucagon-like peptide-1s, or GLP-1s, and Ozempic and Wegovy are two common brand names. Nearly one in 10 people in the U.S. may be using GLP-1s by 2030.¹ While GLP-1s are popular, they are costly and often not covered by insurance. And, at times, there aren't enough GLP-1s for the people who want them.

In response, some people go online to buy GLP-1 drugs. This puts them at risk of buying GLP-1s from people who illegally sell fake, unapproved and sometimes contaminated drugs.



These fake products do not work well and can be harmful. At least three people in the U.S. were hospitalized last year after likely using fake GLP-1s.² Please be careful. Only buy GLP-1s through your provider and pharmacy.

What are the risks?







- Fake or unsterile needles
- Products that are missing tamper-resistant parts (like seals or special caps)
- Products that have applicators with boxes or doses that don't match
- Suppliers illegally mixing and labeling vials as semaglutide (the active ingredient in Ozempic)³
- Suppliers selling Ozempic at a lower rate, taking money and then not delivering⁴
- Pharmacies getting the salt form of semaglutide (semaglutide sodium and acetate)⁴
- Pharmacies giving out pens labeled as Ozempic, when they actually contain insulin glargine⁵

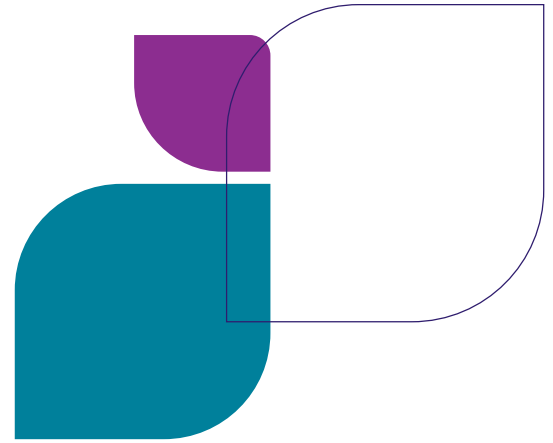
How can you spot fake GLP-1s?

- Spelling errors
- Wrong or mismatched batch number
- Poor-quality label
- Fake needles
- Pen that extends in length
- Wrong ingredients



How can you protect yourself?

-  Buy GLP-1s from real pharmacies that follow federal law.
-  Don't be tricked by sales pitches over the phone.
-  Don't share insurance or personal info over the phone.
-  Be careful about sharing info through online surveys.
-  Choose a provider and pharmacy that's in your network.
-  Take control of your care; ask questions and get help when needed.



What can you do if something isn't right?

Tell your health plan about any concerns you have right away.

You also can use the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy Safe Pharmacy site to find legal online pharmacies: **safe.pharmacy**

All brand names are property of their respective owners.

¹ J.P. Morgan Research. (2023, November 29). *The increase in appetite for obesity drugs*. <https://www.jpmorgan.com/insights/global-research/current-events/obesity-drugs>

² Tin, A. (2023, November 9). *FDA investigating reports of hospitalizations after fake Ozempic*. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fda-ozempic-counterfeit-weight-loss-drugs-hospitalizations/>

³ Carbajal, E. (2023, October 6). *FDA probes phony Ozempic schemes*. Becker's Hospital Review. <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/pharmacy/fda-probes-phony-ozempic-schemes.html>

⁴ National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. (2023, December 28). *FDA warns of fraud pertaining to distribution of Ozempic, other medications*. https://nabp.pharmacy/news/blog/regulatory_news/fda-warns-of-fraud-pertaining-to-distribution-of-ozempic-other-medications/

⁵ Novo Nordisk. (2023, June 15). *Novo Nordisk warns of counterfeit Ozempic® (semaglutide injection) pen found in US*. <https://www.novonordisk-us.com/media/news-archive/news-details.html?id=166119>