

The Crucial Role of Meal Replacements in Enhancing GLP-1 Medication Effects

GLP-1 medications with Medical Nutritional Therapy (with nutritionally complete meal replacements) resulted in a 24.2 percent reduction in body weight is larger than what is typically seen with each modality individually.

— Bacus C, South TL, Raudszus S, Johansen OE. [Retrospective review of seven patients with obesity simultaneously treated with a combination of a glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonist and a meal replacement product](#). Obesity Pillars. 2024 Sep 30; 12:100138.

Using approved anti-obesity medications in conjunction with a very low calorie diet (VLCD) and total meal replacement program is associated with significantly less weight regain at 18 months, highlighting the benefits of combination therapy in obesity management.

— Cifuentes L, Galbiati F, Mahmud H, Rometo D. [Weight regain after total meal replacement very low-calorie diet program with and with-out anti-obesity medications](#). Obesity Science and Practice. 2023 Nov 20;10(1).

There was significantly greater weight loss with a VLCD — and combination of VLCD and semaglutide — than with semaglutide alone. The combination demonstrated the greatest percentage weight loss (14.2 percent) which was significantly greater than semaglutide alone (6.3 percent).

— Anyiam O, Phillips B, Quinn K, Wilkinson D, Smith K, Atherton P, Idris I. [Metabolic effects of very-low calorie diet, Semaglutide, or combination of the two, in individuals with type 2 diabetes mellitus](#). Clin Nutr. 2024 Aug;43(8):1907-1913.

To mitigate the potential loss of lean body mass (LBM) with anti-obesity medications, we provisionally recommend that all patients consume a minimum of 60 g/day of high-quality protein. Similar to rapid weight losses with VLCDs and bariatric surgery, it is important to prioritize servings of lean protein to help preserve LBM. Daily inclusion of a high protein shake(s) may help meet consuming at least 0.8 grams of protein per kilo of body weight.

— Wadden TA, Chao AM, Moore M, Tronieri JS, Gilden A, Amaro A, Leonard S, Jakicic JM. [The Role of Lifestyle Modification with Second-Generation Anti-obesity Medications: Comparisons, Questions, and Clinical Opportunities](#). Curr Obes Rep. 2023 Dec;12(4):453-473.

The combination of the weight loss medication sibutramine and a 1000 kcal/d meal replacement diet for the first 16 weeks increased mean 1-year weight loss to 16.5 percent from 10.4 for sibutramine and weight counseling alone.

— Wadden TA, Berkowitz RI, Sarwer DB, Prus-Wisniewski R, Steinberg C. [Benefits of lifestyle modification in the pharmacologic treatment of obesity: a randomized trial](#). Archives of Internal Medicine 2001 Jan 22;161(2):218-27.

