**FAQs for Patients: New Obesity Treatment – Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)**

**1. What’s changing in obesity treatment?**

A new weight loss medicine called tirzepatide (brand name Mounjaro®) is being introduced in England for adults with obesity and weight-related health problems.

This drug has been used for type 2 diabetes but will now also be offered to help with weight loss. To find out more, please visit: [Obesity - Treatment - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/treatment/).

**2. When will it be available?**

You won’t be able to get tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) immediately after June 2025. Because this is a new treatment, the NHS needs time to set up new services and train staff.

**3. How does it work?**

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) is a weekly injection that:

* Reduces hunger
* Makes you feel full faster
* Slows how quickly food leaves your stomach.

It mimics natural hormones in your body that help control appetite.
You must also take part in a weight loss support programme (focusing on diet and physical activity) while using the medicine.

**4. Who will be offered the treatment first?**

The NHS will roll out the treatment in three stages over three years to those with the highest health risks:

Health conditions that are included:

* Type 2 diabetes
* High blood pressure
* Heart disease
* Obstructive sleep apnoea
* Abnormal blood fats (dyslipidaemia)

Cohort 1 – Starting June 2025

You may qualify if you have:

* 4 or more of the conditions above, and
* A BMI of 40 or more (adjusted for ethnicity\*)

Cohort 2 – Starting year 2

* 4 or more conditions and
* BMI of 35 or more (adjusted for ethnicity\*)

Cohort 3 – Starting year 3

* 3 or more conditions and
* BMI of 40 or more (adjusted for ethnicity\*)

\*People from South Asian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Black African or Caribbean backgrounds will have a lower BMI threshold (2.5 less) due to increased health risks.

**5. What other weight loss support is available on the NHS?**

Tirzepatide isn’t the only option. Other free NHS services include:

* [**NHS Digital Weight Management Programme**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management/) – for people with high blood pressure or diabetes, and a BMI over 30 (27.5 for some ethnic groups).
* [**NHS Type 2 Diabetes Path to Remission Programme**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/treatment-care/diabetes-remission/) – for those diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the last 6 years and who are overweight.
* [**NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/diabetes-prevention/) – for people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

If you qualify for treatment with tirzepatide (Mounjaro) you will be contacted by your practice or local health care providers in due course to discuss this with you. Please do not contact your GP to discuss this without being invited to do so.

**6. What are the side effects?**

Common side effects include:

* Feeling sick
* Indigestion
* Constipation
* Diarrhoea

Less common but more serious side effects include:

* Low blood sugar
* Gallstones
* Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)

Report any side effects through the [**Yellow Card Scheme**](https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/).

**7. How long can I take it for?**

You’ll be reviewed after 6 months. If you haven’t lost at least 5% of your weight, the treatment will likely be stopped.

There is currently no set time limit on how long you can take it - this will be decided between you and your healthcare provider.

**8. Can I take it during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant?**

**No** – it's not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
If you're planning to get pregnant, talk to your doctor about **when to stop** the medication.

**9. What if I’m already taking tirzepatide (Mounjaro®)?**

* If you’re on it for diabetes, you can continue.
* If you’ve been buying it privately, you might be able to switch to an NHS prescription – if you meet the criteria.

Always let your GP know if you’re using this medication, even if privately.

**10. I’m already on an NHS waiting list – do I need to switch?**

Your healthcare team will decide the best setting for your care. You don’t need to take any action on your own.

**11. Will I get support while on the medication?**

Yes. Everyone taking tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) on the NHS must also take part in a wrap-around care programme, which includes support with:

* Diet
* Physical activity
* Lifestyle changes

You can’t be prescribed the drug **without** this support.

**12. Do I have to pay for this treatment?**

You’ll only pay the usual NHS prescription fee, unless you’re eligible for free prescriptions.

**ENDS**