

[NICE](#) recommends that glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) mimetics are indicated at “second intensification of therapy”, if triple therapy with metformin and two other oral drugs is not effective, not tolerated or contraindicated. In these circumstances, a GLP-1 mimetic may be considered in combination therapy with metformin and a sulfonylurea for adults with type 2 diabetes who:

- Have a BMI of 35 kg/m² or higher (adjust accordingly for people from black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups) **and** specific psychological or other medical problems associated with obesity **OR**
- Have a BMI lower than 35 kg/m² **AND**:
 - ◊ For whom insulin therapy would have significant occupational implications or
 - ◊ Weight loss would benefit other significant obesity-related comorbidities.

NICE also recommend that GLP-1 mimetic therapy should only be continued if the person with type 2 diabetes has had a beneficial metabolic response, defined as:

- A reduction of at least 11 mmol/mol (1.0%) in HbA1c **AND**
- A weight loss of at least 3% of initial body weight in 6 months.

The patient should be advised of these targets (and a record made in their notes) at initiation of the drug, so that they are fully informed.

NICE recommends that GLP-1 mimetic therapy in combination with insulin should only be offered **with specialised care advice and ongoing support from a consultant-led multidisciplinary team.**

There are currently six different injectable GLP-1 mimetics available:

- Exenatide (Byetta[®], Bydureon[®])
- Liraglutide (Victoza[®])
- Dulaglutide (Trulicity[®])
- Lixisenatide (Lyxumia[®])
- Semaglutide (Ozempic[®])

GLP-1 mimetics prescribing information

Product type

Injectable GLP-1 mimetic products are available as prefilled pens.

Dosing

Dosing depends on the product, it is either:

- **A once or twice daily dose OR**
- **A weekly dose.**

Note: some products need to be titrated before the maximum dose is reached.

Unlike insulin, the dose does NOT depend on the patient’s food intake. The actual fixed dose should be written on the prescription. **There should be no ‘dose as required’ or ‘dose as directed’ prescriptions for GLP-1 mimetics.**

Pack size and prescribing quantities

- All products come in a pack size which is sufficient for a one month supply.
- Care should be taken to ensure that larger quantities are not mistakenly prescribed.
- Monthly prescription quantities are generally encouraged to avoid waste and for safety reasons.
- HSCB has developed a useful Ready reckoner tool (see Table 1 on page 2) which can assist prescribers when ensuring that only a one month supply is issued. This is also available on the [Primary Care Intranet](#).

Examples of over supply

The following two case examples highlight when prescriptions were issued with the incorrect quantities:

Case example one

A patient was prescribed 4 pens each month of semaglutide 0.5mg (Ozempic[®]) at a dose 0.5mg weekly.

- **The correct quantity to prescribe was ONE pen per month.**
 - The annual cost of prescribing 4 pens of semaglutide 0.5mg is £3,513
 - The annual cost of prescribing 1 pen per month (correct amount) is £878
- ⇒ **This cost of over supply for this patient was £2635 per year.**

Case example two

A patient was prescribed 8 pens each month of liraglutide 6mg/ml (Victoza[®]) at a dose of 1.2mg daily.

- **The correct quantity to prescribe for this dose is TWO pens per month**
 - The annual cost of prescribing 8 pens per month is £3,767
 - The annual cost of prescribing 2 pens per month (correct amount) is £942
- ⇒ **This cost of over supply for this patient was £2,825 per year.**

Actions

GP practices

- GP practices should review prescribing of GLP-1 mimetics to ensure they are prescribed in line with NICE guidance. Discontinue treatment if NICE criteria have not been met.
- For patients who remain on GLP-1 mimetics, prescribing quantities should be reviewed using the HSCB Ready reckoner tool in Table 1.
- Routinely, only one month should be issued on a prescription.



Community pharmacists

- Community pharmacists should highlight to the GP practice if patients are prescribed excessive quantities per month.

Correction: page two, Case example one — dose of Ozempic[®] has now been changed to weekly (rather than daily as previously issued).

Table 1: Injectable GLP-1 mimetics Ready reckoner tool

Name of GLP-1 mimetic	Dose	Pack size and strength	Monthly Cost (May 2021 NI Drug Tariff)	Packs needed for 1 month supply
Exenatide (twice-daily injection) Byetta	5 micrograms twice daily before meals, increased if necessary to 10 micrograms twice daily	5 micrograms /0.02ml 1.2 ml pre-filled pen	£81.89	Each pack contains ONE pre-filled pen (60 doses) ONE PEN is sufficient for 30 days supply
		10 micrograms /0.04ml 2.4 ml pre-filled pen	£81.89	Each pack contains ONE pre-filled pen (60 doses) ONE PEN is sufficient for 30 days supply
Exenatide (once-weekly injection) Bydureon	2mg once weekly	4 x 2mg prolonged-release suspension for injection in pre-filled pen	£73.36	Each pack contains 4 pre-filled disposable injections FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks
Liraglutide (once-daily injection) Victoza	Initially 0.6mg once daily for at least 1 week, then increased to 1.2mg once daily for at least 1 week, then increased if necessary to 1.8mg once daily	2 x 6mg /ml 3ml pre-filled pens	£78.48	For a 1.2mg daily dose: TWO PENS are sufficient for 30 days
		3 x 6mg /ml 3ml pre-filled pens	£117.72	For a 1.8mg daily dose THREE PENS are sufficient for 30 days
Lixisenatide (once-daily injection) Lyxumia	Initially 10 micrograms once daily for 14 days, then increased to 20 micrograms once daily	1 x 10 micrograms /0.2ml 3ml pre-filled pen (Titration dose only for first 14 days of treatment)	*£31.67 *Price for one pen for 2 week titration dose	10 microgram dose is a TITRATION dose, therefore 10 microgram pens should not be added to repeat prescriptions ONE PEN will last 15 days
		2 x 20 micrograms /0.2ml 3ml pre-filled pens	£57.93	For a 20 microgram dose TWO PENS are sufficient for 30 days
Dulaglutide (once-weekly injection) Trulicity	0.75mg once weekly as monotherapy 1.5mg once weekly in combination treatment	4 x 0.75mg /0.5ml pre-filled pens	£73.25	FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks
		4 x 1.5mg /0.5ml pre-filled pens	£73.25	FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks
Semaglutide (once weekly injection) Ozempic	Initially 0.25mg once weekly for 4 weeks, then increased to 0.5mg once weekly for at least 4 weeks, then increased if necessary to 1mg once weekly	0.25mg /0.19ml 1.5ml pre-filled pen (Titration dose only for first 4 weeks of treatment)	£73.25	0.25mg strength is a TITRATION dose, therefore 0.25mg pens should not be added to repeat prescriptions ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks
		0.5mg /0.37ml 1.5ml pre-filled pen	£73.25	ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks
		1mg /0.74ml 3ml pre-filled pen	£73.25	ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks

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