

[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/m<sup>2</sup> 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/m<sup>2</sup> **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<sup>®</sup>, Bydureon<sup>®</sup>)
- Liraglutide (Victoza<sup>®</sup>)
- Dulaglutide (Trulicity<sup>®</sup>)
- Lixisenatide (Lyxumia<sup>®</sup>)
- Semaglutide (Ozempic<sup>®</sup>)

## **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
<b>Exenatide</b> (twice-daily injection) <b>Byetta</b>	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) <b>ONE PEN is sufficient for 30 days supply</b>
		10 micrograms /0.04ml 2.4 ml pre-filled pen	£81.89	Each pack contains ONE pre-filled pen (60 doses) <b>ONE PEN is sufficient for 30 days supply</b>
<b>Exenatide</b> (once-weekly injection) <b>Bydureon</b>	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 <b>FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks</b>
<b>Liraglutide</b> (once-daily injection) <b>Victoza</b>	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	<b>For a 1.2mg daily dose:</b> <b>TWO PENS are sufficient for 30 days</b>
		3 x 6mg /ml 3ml pre-filled pens	£117.72	<b>For a 1.8mg daily dose</b> <b>THREE PENS are sufficient for 30 days</b>
<b>Lixisenatide</b> (once-daily injection) <b>Lyxumia</b>	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 <b>(Titration dose only for first 14 days of treatment)</b>	*£31.67 *Price for one pen for 2 week titration dose	<b>10 microgram dose is a TITRATION dose, therefore 10 microgram pens should not be added to repeat prescriptions</b> <b>ONE PEN will last 15 days</b>
		2 x 20 micrograms /0.2ml 3ml pre-filled pens	£57.93	For a 20 microgram dose <b>TWO PENS are sufficient for 30 days</b>
<b>Dulaglutide</b> (once-weekly injection) <b>Trulicity</b>	0.75mg once weekly as monotherapy 1.5mg once weekly in combination treatment	4 x 0.75mg /0.5ml pre-filled pens	£73.25	<b>FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks</b>
		4 x 1.5mg /0.5ml pre-filled pens	£73.25	<b>FOUR PENS are sufficient for 4 weeks</b>
<b>Semaglutide</b> (once weekly injection) <b>Ozempic</b>	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 <b>(Titration dose only for first 4 weeks of treatment)</b>	£73.25	<b>0.25mg strength is a TITRATION dose, therefore 0.25mg pens should not be added to repeat prescriptions</b> <b>ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks</b>
		0.5mg /0.37ml 1.5ml pre-filled pen	£73.25	<b>ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks</b>
		1mg /0.74ml 1.5ml pre-filled pen	£73.25	<b>ONE PEN is sufficient for 4 weeks</b>

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