

OPTIFAST® Side Effects

OPTIFAST®

OPTIFAST® is a weight management program that helps you lose weight quickly and safely. The program limits the number of calories you eat each day.

The following side effects may be possible when limiting calories and losing weight quickly. If you have any questions, please talk with your weight management provider.

Common

The most common side effects include fatigue (tiredness), nausea (upset stomach), constipation and diarrhea.

These side effects can be treated with lifestyle changes or over-the-counter medicines.

Less Common

Other possible side effects may include:

- heartburn
- vomiting (throwing up)
- low blood glucose
- gout flare-ups
- cold sensitivity
- dry skin
- hair loss
- brittle nails
- menstruation changes
- changes in your desire to have sex.

Most of these side effects are treatable. Tell your weight management provider if you have any of these side effects or any concerns.

It's also possible you could have slight changes in blood cell counts or elevated liver enzyme counts. These are found during blood tests and your weight management provider will help you manage these side effects.

Less Common but Serious

More serious side effects can occur, however, these are rare.

Dehydration or electrolyte imbalance

It's important to eat all the food and drink all the liquids recommended by the OPTIFAST program. If you do not do this, or take a diuretic (water pill), it may cause:

- dehydration (not enough fluids in your body)
- an electrolyte imbalance (an increase or decrease in electrolytes such as sodium or potassium).

Low potassium levels could cause heart irregularities.

Call your weight management provider right away if you have:

- chest pain
- palpitations
- shortness of breath
- lightheadness or you pass out
- weakness.

You need to drink 64 ounces (8 cups) of zero-calorie liquids each day.

(over)

Gallstones

People who are overweight have a higher chance of developing gallstones. These are hard, pebble-like pieces that form in your gallbladder. It's possible to have gallstones and not know it. These are called "silent" gallstones.

Call your weight management provider right away if you have sudden pain in your upper right abdomen. You may need medicine or surgery to treat them. If left untreated, gallstones can cause serious problems.

Losing weight quickly can increase your chances of developing gallstones or increasing the size of an existing gallstone.

Pancreatitis

Pancreatitis is a disease that occurs when the pancreas becomes inflamed. The pancreas is an organ that makes insulin and other enzymes (digestive juices) that help digest food.

The most common causes of pancreatitis are gallstones and drinking large amounts of alcohol.

Call your weight management provider right away if you have:

- a fever
- nausea or vomiting
- pain in the center or upper left abdomen.

You may need surgery to treat this disease. If left untreated, it can cause serious complications including death.

Sudden Death

People who are overweight and have other serious diseases (such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, diabetes) have a higher chance of sudden death.

Rare cases of sudden death have occurred while people were part of a medically supervised weight loss program. Research did not find a cause and effect link with the OPTIFAST diet.

Program Guidelines

During the first phase of the program, you should avoid:

- drinking any alcohol
- using any over-the-counter supplements, including other weight loss products, unless your weight management provider says it's OK
- donating blood
- having surgery, unless it's an emergency (If you must have surgery, it's important to tell your surgeon that you are in the OPTIFAST program.)
- getting pregnant. (If you get pregnant, it's important to tell your weight management provider right away. Limiting calories when you are pregnant could harm your unborn baby. It's important to use reliable birth control until you are done with the program.)

Your Role During the Program

To be successful during the program, it's important that you:

- give honest and complete information about your health, weight, eating activity and lifestyle
- go to all medical visit appointments
- complete all blood tests and studies recommended by your health care team
- eat all meals as prescribed and avoid binge eating to reduce the risk of side effects
- drink 64 ounces (8 cups) of zero-calorie liquids each day
- continue your current activity level at the beginning of the program (You may gradually increase the intensity, duration or both as tolerated, if OK'd by your weight management provider.)
- go to weekly weigh-ins and group educational classes to improve your chances of long-term weight loss success.