

# Medicines and Weight Gain

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There are many causes for weight gain. Not getting enough exercise, eating unhealthful foods, eating large portion sizes and drinking high-calorie beverages can all contribute but did you know some medicines can cause weight gain too?

Some medicines can:

- make you feel hungrier (increase your appetite)
- slow down your body's ability to burn calories (metabolism)
- cause your body to hold on to extra fluids (fluid retention).

**Important:** Everyone reacts differently to medicines. Just because you are taking a medicine that lists weight gain as a side effect does not mean you will gain weight.

## Common Medicines That Can Cause Weight Gain

Here are the most common types of medicines that can cause weight gain:

- **Anticonvulsants:** These are used to stabilize moods or treat seizures.
  - pregabalin (Lyrica<sup>®</sup>)
  - valproic acid (Depakote<sup>®</sup>, Depacon<sup>®</sup>, Depakene<sup>®</sup>, Depakote<sup>®</sup> delayed release, Depakote<sup>®</sup> ER, Depakote<sup>®</sup> Sprinkle Capsules delayed release capsules)
  - gabapentin (Neurontin<sup>®</sup>)
  - carbamazepine (Tegretol<sup>®</sup>)
- **Antidepressants:** These are used to treat serious depression, phobias, anxiety disorders, bedwetting, some bulimic-type eating disorders, PTSD and obsessive-compulsive disorder.
  - amitriptyline (Elavil<sup>®</sup>)
  - doxepin (Adapin<sup>®</sup>, Sinequan<sup>®</sup>)
  - imipramine (Tofranil<sup>®</sup>)
  - nortriptyline (Pamelor<sup>®</sup>)
  - trimipramine (Surmontil<sup>®</sup>)
  - maprotiline (Ludiomil<sup>®</sup>)
  - mirtazapine (Remeron<sup>®</sup>)
  - fluoxetine (Prozac<sup>®</sup>)
  - sertraline (Zoloft<sup>®</sup>)
  - paroxetine (Paxil<sup>®</sup>)
  - fluvoxamine (Luvox<sup>®</sup>)
  - phenelzine (Nardil<sup>®</sup>)
  - tranylcypromine (Parnate<sup>®</sup>)
  - lithium (Eskalith<sup>®</sup>, Eskalith CR<sup>®</sup>, Lithobid<sup>®</sup>)
- **Antihistamines:** These are used to treat allergies.
  - fexofenadine (Allegra<sup>®</sup>)
  - cetirizine (Zyrtec<sup>®</sup>)
- **Antihypertensives:** These are used to treat high blood pressure.
  - atenolol (Tenormin<sup>®</sup>)
  - propranolol (Inderal<sup>®</sup>)
  - amlodipine (Norvasc<sup>®</sup>)
  - clonidine (Catapres<sup>®</sup>)

*(over)*

- **Antipsychotics:** These are used to treat psychiatric disorders.
  - clozapine (Clozaril®)
  - haloperidol (Haldol®)
  - loxapine (Loxapac®, Loxitane®)
  - olanzapine (Zyprexa®)
  - risperidone (Risperdal®)
  - quetiapine (Seroquel®)
  - valproate semisodium (Depakote®, Depakene®)
  - ziprasidone (Geodon®)
- **Corticosteroids:** These are used to treat (bring down) inflammation.
  - oral (by mouth) prednisone (Deltasone®)
  - oral (by mouth) methylprednisolone (Medrol®)
  - hydrocortisone (Solu-Cortef®)
- **Diabetes medicines**
  - glyburide (Diabeta®)
  - glipizide (Glucotrol®)
  - pioglitazone (Actos®)
  - rosiglitazone (Avandia®)
  - glimepiride (Amaryl®)

## Tips for Managing Your Weight

Here are some things you can do to help manage your weight while taking medicines that can cause weight gain.

- **Create a meal structure.**  
Plan meals and snacks for specific times throughout the day (for example, breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner). This can help decrease “grazing” (constant snacking) and help you become more mindful of when you are hungry.
- **Do a favorite hobby or activity to prevent eating out of boredom.**  
You can try painting your nails, reading, drawing, doing puzzles or word games, or exercising to keep your mind off of food.

- **Drink water.**  
Sometimes you can feel a false sense of hunger when you are thirsty. Before reaching for a snack, try drinking a glass of water. If you still feel hungry, have something to eat.
- **Practice mindful eating.**  
Get rid of distractions such as TV and social media when you eat. Sit down. Focus on your food. Notice how it tastes as you chew each bite. This will likely help you enjoy your food more and may help you eat less by allowing you to notice when you feel full.
- **Keep tempting foods out.**  
The easiest way to avoid eating unhealthy foods is to keep them out of your home. If you are tempted by ice cream, go to a special ice cream shop to enjoy a small portion instead of digging into a carton from your freezer. You may find you are less likely to leave the house and more likely to choose a healthful snack from home instead.
- **Bring healthful foods in.**  
A well-stocked kitchen is key to success! Here are some tips as you grocery shop.
  - Never go to the grocery store hungry. (Everything will look good and you will likely come home with extra items.)
  - Make a list and stick to it! Make sure to include whole grains, fish and lean meats, eggs, low-fat or fat-free dairy products (yogurt, milk), healthful fats (nuts, avocado), and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables on your list. Check each item off as you put it in your cart.

**Tip:** There are some great grocery list apps that can help you plan and organize your shopping list.
- **Eat with others.**  
Regularly eating with others who eat healthful foods can help you stick to your own goals for better health. Together, you can create healthy habits and support each other along the way.