

## Saxenda

### (liraglutide (weight management))

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### How does this medication work? What will it do for me?

Liraglutide belongs to the class of medications called *human glucagon-like peptides*. It is used for chronic (long-term) management of body weight, together with reduced caloric intake and increased physical activity. It may be prescribed for individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more, or people with a BMI of 27 kg/m<sup>2</sup> who also have another weight-related illness, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes or *dyslipidemia* (high cholesterol).

Liraglutide aids in weight control by affecting sensations of hunger, causing a decrease in appetite and food intake. It slows down the passage of food from the stomach into the intestine, causing the user to "feel full" for longer after a meal. It also decreases the maximum glucose level in the blood and the amount of insulin needed for the body to use the glucose.

### How should I use this medication?

**The recommended adult starting dose of liraglutide is 0.6 mg daily injected *subcutaneously* (under the skin) on your stomach area (abdomen), upper thigh, or upper arm, exactly as instructed by your doctor.** It can be injected at any time of the day, without regard to meals. After one week, your doctor will increase the dose to 1.2 mg once daily, gradually increasing the dose to the recommended 3 mg daily. This gradual increase of the dose should minimize side effects on the digestive system.

Your doctor or nurse will assist you in the preparation and injection of your first dose (or first few doses) and can teach you how to give yourself the injection at home. **Do not attempt to inject this medication on your own until you completely understand how to inject a dose.** If you are unsure of how to prepare or administer a dose, ask a health care professional to clarify for you. If you are having difficulty giving yourself injections, ask a family member or other caregiver for help if they are willing to become involved with your treatment and are willing to learn how to give you your injections.

Use a different injection site for each dose. Avoid injecting this medication into an area of skin that is sore, red, infected, or otherwise damaged.

**Liraglutide should be clear and colourless.** Do not use liraglutide if you notice particles or anything unusual in the appearance of the solution.

Many things can affect the dose of medication that a person needs, such as body weight, other medical conditions, and other medications. **If your doctor has recommended a dose different from the ones listed here**, do not change the way that you are taking the medication without consulting your doctor.

It is important to take this medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. If you miss a dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular dosing schedule. If you miss more than 3 doses in a row, contact your doctor or pharmacist for instructions. **Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one. If you are not sure what to do after missing a dose, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.**

Store this medication in the refrigerator, do not allow it to freeze, and keep it out of the reach of children. After the first use of the pen, this medication can be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 30 days. To protect this medication from light, always keep the pen cap on when you are not using it. Always store this medication without a needle attached to prevent contamination, infection, and leakage.

### What form(s) does this medication come in?

Each mL of clear, colourless solution contains 6 mg of liraglutide. *Nonmedicinal ingredients:* disodium phosphate dihydrate, propylene glycol, phenol, and water for injection.

### Who should NOT take this medication?

**Do not take this medication if you:**

- are allergic to liraglutide or any ingredients of the medication
- are pregnant
- are breast-feeding
- have a personal or family history of thyroid cancer
- have *multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2* (a disease where people have tumours in more than one gland in their body)

### What side effects are possible with this medication?

- changed sense of taste
- constipation
- decreased appetite

- diarrhea
- dizziness
- dry mouth
- fatigue
- gas
- heartburn
- mild abdominal pain or swelling
- nausea
- redness, itching, or swelling at the site of injection
- tiredness
- trouble sleeping
- vomiting
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**Check with your doctor as soon as possible if any of the following side effects occur:**

- heart rhythm changes (e.g., dizziness, palpitations, increased heart rate, fainting)
- signs of dehydration (e.g., decreased urine, dry skin, dry and sticky mouth, sleepiness, dizziness, headache, thirst, confusion)
- signs of kidney problems (e.g., increased urination at night, decreased urine production, blood in the urine)
- signs of low blood glucose (e.g., anxiety, blurred vision, confusion, difficulty concentrating, difficulty speaking, dizziness, drowsiness, fast heartbeat, feeling jittery, headache, hunger, irritability, nausea, nervousness, numbness or tingling of the lips or tongue, sweating, tiredness, trembling, weakness)
- skin rash
- symptoms of gallstones (e.g., abdominal pain, pain between shoulders, nausea, vomiting)

**Stop taking the medication and seek immediate medical attention if *any* of the following occur:**

- severe hypoglycemia (e.g., disorientation, loss of consciousness, seizures)
- signs of pancreatitis (e.g., abdominal pain on the upper left side, back pain, nausea, fever, chills, rapid heartbeat, swollen abdomen)
- symptoms of a serious allergic reaction (e.g., swelling of the face or throat, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or itchy skin rash)