

WESTERN ZONE OBESITY NETWORK

NOVA SCOTIA

PATIENT INFORMATION

Restarting Your Weight-Loss Injection After a Break

Wegovy® (semaglutide) and Zepbound® (tirzepatide)

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Why this matters

Wegovy and Zepbound reduce appetite by acting on the energy-regulating centres in the brain. The same signals also reach areas of the brain that can cause nausea. That is why the dose is raised in small steps over several weeks, a process called **dose escalation**. For most people, nausea settles as the body gets used to each new dose.

Research in people taking these medications shows that this build-up of tolerance to nausea is real, and that raising the dose slowly is what makes higher doses comfortable. If you stop for a while, some of that tolerance fades.

So whether you can pick up where you left off depends on two things:

- **How long** you were off the medication
- **Whether higher doses made you feel sick** the first time you worked up to them

If you missed just one dose

Wegovy semaglutide

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember, as long as your next scheduled dose is more than **2 days (48 hours)** away. If your next dose is less than 2 days away, skip the missed dose and carry on with your regular schedule.

Zepbound tirzepatide

Take the missed dose as soon as you can, within **4 days (96 hours)** of when it was due. If more than 4 days have passed, skip it and take your next dose on its usual day.

One rule for both

Never take two doses to make up for one you missed.

IF YOU MISSED TWO OR MORE DOSES IN A ROW

A longer break

The manufacturers' instructions allow two options: go back to your usual dose, or restart at a lower dose and work back up. Restarting lower and re-escalating reduces the chance that nausea returns. The instructions do not say which option to choose, so this is a decision we make together.

How I approach this

The guidance below is **my clinical approach**. It is based on the product monographs plus what is known about how these medications clear from the body and how tolerance to nausea builds and fades. It is not a rule printed in the product monograph, so please check with me before restarting after a break of more than two weeks.

Off for 2 weeks or less

Most people can restart at the same dose, provided that dose was comfortable before the break.

Off for 3 to 4 weeks

By this point most of the medication has cleared from your body. Semaglutide leaves the body slowly, with a half-life of about one week, and tirzepatide takes about five to six days. After three or four weeks without an injection, only a small amount is left. Restarting at your old dose is much closer to taking that dose for the first time than it feels.

So my approach is to restart at about half your previous dose, rounded to the nearest strength that is actually made, and for Zepbound no higher than 5 mg. A few things to weigh: whether higher doses bothered you the first time around, and the trade-off between restarting too low and too high. Restarting too low costs a few extra weeks of stepping back up and can lose momentum. Restarting too high can cause nausea bad enough that some people stop the medication for good, which can be a big missed opportunity.

Wegovy (semaglutide)

PREVIOUS DOSE	RESTART AT
2.4 mg	1 mg
1.7 mg	1 mg
1 mg	0.5 mg
0.5 mg	0.25 mg
0.25 mg	stay at 0.25 mg

Zepbound (tirzepatide)

PREVIOUS DOSE	RESTART AT
15 mg	5 mg
12.5 mg	5 mg
10 mg	5 mg
7.5 mg	5 mg
5 mg	2.5 mg
2.5 mg	stay at 2.5 mg

Because you have already been at these doses before, we may be able to move back up more quickly than you did the first time. We will plan that together.

Off for 5 weeks or more

After five weeks, the medication is essentially out of your system. The manufacturer notes that semaglutide stays in the circulation for about five to seven weeks after a 2.4 mg dose, so this is the point at which any head start you had is gone.

Restart from the beginning

Restart at the lowest starting dose and follow the step-up schedule again, as you did at the very beginning. Please contact your physician before you restart so we can make a plan together.

Quick reference

TIME OFF THE MEDICATION	HIGHER DOSES WERE COMFORTABLE BEFORE	HIGHER DOSES CAUSED NAUSEA OR VOMITING BEFORE
One missed dose	Wegovy: take it if your next dose is more than 2 days away. Zepbound: take it within 4 days. Otherwise skip it.	Same as at left.
1 to 2 weeks	Restart at the same dose.	Restart at the same dose, or drop one level if you would rather ease back in.
3 to 4 weeks	Restart at about half your previous dose, whatever your experience was the first time. See the dose tables above.	
5 weeks or more	Restart at the lowest starting dose and follow the full step-up schedule again.	

THE SAFER DEFAULT

When in doubt, restarting lower is the safer choice. The worst outcome is a few extra weeks of stepping up. Restarting too high can cause nausea bad enough that people stop altogether.

What to expect after a longer break

Appetite usually returns, and some weight often comes back. In studies, people regained roughly two thirds of the weight they had lost within a year of stopping semaglutide. This is not a personal failure. Obesity is a chronic condition, and these medications work while you are taking them, in the same way blood pressure medication works while you take it. Restarting is worth doing.

Tips for restarting comfortably

- Eat smaller meals and stop as soon as you feel full
- Go easy on fatty, greasy, or very spicy foods for the first few days
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Inject on the same day each week so the schedule stays predictable
- For mild nausea, an over-the-counter option such as dimenhydrinate (Gravol) may help. Ask your pharmacist or me first
- Do not double up on doses to make up for missed ones

When to contact the office

Please get in touch if:

- You have been off the medication for more than 2 weeks and are unsure what dose to restart at
- You have significant nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain after restarting
- You have had new medical problems, new medications, or surgery since you stopped
- You are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning a pregnancy. These medications should be stopped before pregnancy

Seek medical care the same day

Severe stomach pain that will not go away, especially pain that spreads through to your back, with or without vomiting. This can be a sign of inflammation of the pancreas.

This handout is general information and does not replace medical advice. Your own restart plan should always be discussed with Dr. Michael Mindrum, MD, FRCPC. Reviewed August 2026.

References

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