Mounjaro Injection (Weight loss Management)

Mounjaro (tirzepatide) is a prescription medication approved by the FDA for the treatment of type-2 diabetes. Eli Lilly, the pharmaceutical company that has developed tirzepatide, anticipates that in late 2023 the FDA will also approve use of Mounjaro as a weight loss medication in patients with obesity.

Mounjaro belongs to the same class of drugs known as glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonists as other weight loss drugs Wegovy (semaglutide) and Saxenda (liraglutide). However, Mounjaro also acts as an agonist for glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP), which can provide additional benefits for weight loss and blood sugar control.

Mounjaro is effective as a weight loss medication by suppressing appetite. It is injected once a week under the skin (subcutaneously) of the stomach (abdomen), thigh, or upper arm.

As with all weight loss drugs, Mounjaro should always be used as part of a weight loss program that includes a healthy reduced-calorie diet, exercise, and behavior change. This medication is intended for people who are significantly overweight or obese, and who have not been able to lose weight through diet and exercise alone.

How does Mounjaro work for weight loss?

Mounjaro and the other GLP-1 agonists work by slowing the rate food passes through the digestive system, which increases the sensation of fullness. In addition, GLP-1 agonists work in the brain to decrease hunger. The result is that Mounjaro and other GLP-1 agonists make it easier to follow a reduced-calorie diet. These medications do not make you "burn calories" or enable you to "lose weight without dieting."

What are the health benefits of Mounjaro?

Mounjaro can help people with obesity first lose weight and then help with the second critical step of maintaining that healthier weight. Doing so has many health benefits.

The health risks accompanying obesity are generally well known, and include heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, stroke, certain types of cancer, and a shortened life span. In pre-menopausal women, obesity is also associated with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a condition characterized by hormonal changes resulting in irregular menses, difficulty getting pregnant, and excess body hair.

Losing weight can prevent, treat, and in some cases, even reverse obesity-related health conditions. A patient does not have to become "slender" to benefit from weight loss; just 5-10% (10-20 lbs in a 200 lb person) can result in very significant health improvements, including lowering blood pressure, lipids, blood glucose, and hemoglobin A1c. There can also be physical benefits (more energy, better mobility, diminished joint pains) and mental/emotional benefits such as reduced stress and anxiety and increased confidence and self-esteem.

What are the potential side effects of Mounjaro?

Like all medications, Mounjaro has potential side effects. The most common side effects include:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Decreased appetite
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Indigestion
- Stomach pain

Other less common but potentially serious side effects include:

- Increased heart rate or blood pressure
- Allergic reaction
- Severe pain in the stomach (possible sign of inflammation of the pancreas)
- Low blood sugar
- Changes in vision
- Gallbladder problems (that can result in yellowing of the skin or pain in the upper stomach region).

As these side effects may not be all the possible side effects of Mounjaro, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about any symptoms that develop while on Mounjaro that bother you or do not go away.

Before starting any prescription medication, it is very important to talk with your healthcare provider about your medical history and the potential risks and benefits of the medication. After starting Mounjaro it is important to remain under the supervision of a qualified healthcare provider since adjustments of the dose are often needed. In addition, your provider can help to address any potential side effects and to assess your progress in the weight loss program.