

Eating Well While Taking Semaglutide

Semaglutide lowers your appetite and slows digestion, so what and how you eat matters. These habits help you feel better, protect muscle, and get the most from treatment.

Build your plate

½ non-starchy vegetables

¼ lean protein

¼ whole grains / starchy vegetables

plus a glass of water

Everyday eating habits

- 1 Put protein first.** Eat protein at the start of every meal to protect muscle mass. Aim for 20–30g (a palm-sized portion) per meal, targeting 1.2–1.5g per kg of body weight daily. Good sources: eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, chicken, fish, beans and lentils, tofu, and nuts. Try a 20+ protein shake on low-appetite days.
- 2 Eat small, eat slowly.** Have smaller meals every 3-4 hours. Pause between bites and stop when “comfortably full” to prevent nausea, bloating, and reflux.
- 3 Stay hydrated.** Medication can reduce thirst, so sip fluids throughout the day. Aim for 8+ cups of water daily to help ease constipation, dizziness, and fatigue.
- 4 Cover key nutrients.** Because portions are smaller, ask your doctor about vitamin D, calcium, and B12, and whether a daily multivitamin is right for you.

Move your body

Aim for about 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity — brisk walking, cycling, or swimming (even 10-minute sessions count). Add strength training 2–3 days a week for all major muscles; this is key to protecting muscle you may lose while on semaglutide.

Start gradually and build up, take a short walk to aid digestion, and sit less. Pair activity with enough protein for the full muscle benefit.

What to expect — side effects

Common effects are nausea, constipation, diarrhea, bloating or fullness, and mild belching or reflux. They are usually mild, happen most when you start or raise your dose, and ease within days to a couple of weeks as your body adjusts.

To ease them: eat small, slow, lower-fat meals and keep fluids steady. For nausea, try ginger or peppermint and skip greasy or sweet foods. For constipation, add fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains) and ask about a fiber or magnesium supplement.

Injections may sting. Let the pen reach room temperature first, and try the thigh instead of the abdomen. Mild redness or itching at the site is normal; over-the-counter hydrocortisone or diphenhydramine cream can help.

Tell your study team if symptoms are severe or do not settle.

Healthy habits beyond food

- Sleep 7+ hours a night
- Manage stress — walks, breathing, time outdoors
- Eat mindfully — set times, screens off, honor fullness
- Track your food, activity, or weight
- Lean on family, your study team, or a dietitian

Go easy on these

These can worsen symptoms:

- Greasy or fried foods
- Very sweet or sugary foods
- Very large portions
- Carbonated or energy drinks
- Excess caffeine
- Alcohol

Focus on sustainable habits, energy, and strength. Aim for enough nourishment — very low intake or skipped meals can backfire and is not safe.