



# Avoidance of Risky Substances While Using Obesity Management Medications

(Alcohol, nicotine, and other substances)



## Why This Matters

GLP-1 medications and other obesity management medications change how your body handles food and drinks. Because of this, alcohol and nicotine can affect you more than before. They may make side effects like nausea, dizziness, heartburn, or fatigue worse. Some people also notice that they want alcohol less while taking GLP 1 medicines. This is common, but not everyone experiences it.

## What Many People Notice on GLP-1 Medications



Alcohol feels stronger or uncomfortable. Smaller amounts may cause nausea or lightheadedness.



Less interest in drinking. You may not crave alcohol the way you used to.



Smoking or vaping can upset your stomach. Nicotine can make nausea and reflux worse and is hard on your heart and lungs.

Everyone's body is different. Pay attention to how you feel.

# Ways To Protect Your Health



1

## IF YOU CHOOSE TO DRINK ALCOHOL

- Drink small amounts and drink slowly
- Sip water often, especially between drinks
- Avoid drinking on an empty stomach
- Stop drinking if you feel sick, dizzy, or uncomfortable

2

## IF YOU ARE CUTTING BACK OR NOT DRINKING

- Pick a go to non alcohol drink (sparkling water, diet soda, tea, or alcohol free beer)
- Remember: You don't need a reason to say no to alcohol

3

## FOR SMOKING OR VAPING

- Cutting back or quitting can reduce nausea and improve heart health
- Help is available, including counseling, nicotine replacement, and medications



## NAVIGATING ALCOHOL-CENTERED EVENTS (WITHOUT FEELING LIKE THE ODD ONE OUT)

Social connection matters for health, even when your substance use changes.

- ✓ **Arrive with a plan:** decide ahead of time what you'll drink (or not drink).
- ✓ **Use a one-line response:**  
"I'm taking a break from alcohol for my health."  
"This medication makes alcohol not sit well with me."
- ✓ **Hold a drink early:** a non-alcoholic beverage in hand often stops repeated offers.
- ✓ **Shift the focus:** suggest conversation, music, games, or a walk—connection doesn't require alcohol.
- ✓ **Have an exit option:** shorter stays are okay, especially while your body adjusts.

## When Extra Support Helps

If alcohol or nicotine use feels hard to change, or if you want help stopping, support works. Counseling, peer groups, and medications can be effective and can be used alongside obesity management medications.



## Key Take-Home Message

While using GLP-1 medicines, less alcohol and no nicotine is safest for most people. Many notice reduced desire for alcohol and fewer benefits from drinking. Listen to your body, plan for social situations, and reach out for support when needed.

