

Unregulated peptides are the latest weight loss and energy-boosting fad. What's the science?

After decades of turning to diet pills, steroids and plastic surgery to alter their bodies inside and out, people are increasingly open to an alternative method: injecting themselves with peptides at home.

Proponents say that peptides—a broad category of substances including FDA-approved drugs, supplements and experimental treatments—can help them build lean muscle, shed weight, increase energy and get a dewy glow. Though the term has appeared on a range of consumer products for years, injectable peptides are getting more attention as celebrity doctors and influencers share stories of physiological transformations that go beyond diet and exercise.

These substances are being prescribed to patients by doctors as well as paramedical providers such as nurses and naturopaths, even though several in-demand peptides are not approved by regulators. The lack of oversight has raised concerns about the purity of ingredients, improper dosing and unknown side effects. But advocates say they're comfortable with any risks.

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Some clients remain squeamish about at-home injections, Ms. Sherrill said. But she has seen interest rise over the past two years, especially as [Type 2 diabetes drug Ozempic](#), which is taken by injection, has gained traction among people looking to lose some weight.

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