

Ozempic for life? Weight loss drugs are meant to be used long term. What happens if you stop taking them?

Millions of Americans who have dropped pounds and boosted their health using popular obesity drugs like Wegovy are facing a new dilemma: What happens if they stop taking them?

Many worry, rightly, that they'll regain weight and revert to old habits. In clinical trials, patients who paused the drugs put back on most of the weight they lost.

But others are gambling on a do-it-yourself strategy to ease off the drugs and stay slim by stretching out doses, taking the medication intermittently or stopping and starting again only if needed.

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But hoping the drugs' benefits will last even after stopping them ignores the fundamental biology of obesity, experts said. The disease affects the way the body processes and stores energy, causing it to accumulate weight. The new drugs alter that process and when patients stop, the disease returns, often with a vengeance.

Many people dropping off the medications report a sharp rise in symptoms of obesity. They include so-called food noise or intrusive thoughts of food; raging hunger; and decreased feelings of fullness when they eat.

"These drugs are just a super-suppressor of these native signals," [University of Michigan endocrinologist Dr. Amy] Rothberg said. "And we should expect that's going to occur."

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)