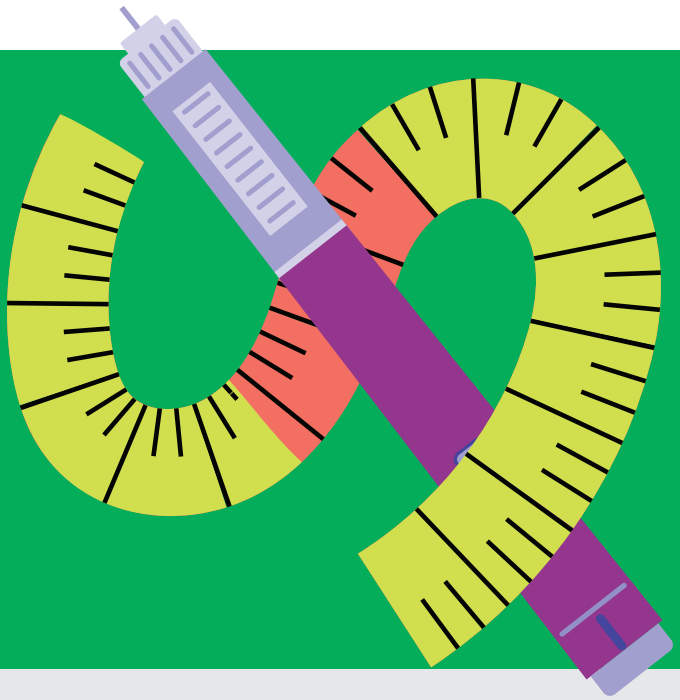
Arthritis Foundation®

Losing Weight With Arthritis Is Hard: This Might Help

You know that keeping a healthy weight and staying active can help ease arthritis pain and support your independence. But losing extra weight isn't easy, especially when you're dealing with joint pain, stiffness and fatigue.





In a recent survey of people with arthritis, 65% told us they are above a healthy weight, and 89% of those said they're trying to lose weight.*

WHY DOES WEIGHT MATTER?

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight can:

- Take pressure off weight-bearing joints, easing pain and improving joint health
- Lower inflammation that can make arthritis and other health problems worse
- Make daily activities and exercise easier, which helps improve overall health
- Boost energy and reduce fatigue
- Lower the risk of complications during surgery, including joint replacement
- Help improve sleep and reduce stress, anxiety and depression

WHY IS LOSING WEIGHT SO HARD?

If you're like most people trying to lose weight, you've likely experienced the frustration of trying diet after diet while doing your best to stay active. The fact is, diet and exercise just aren't enough for some people. Common challenges include:

- Pain
- Limited ability to move
- Fatigue
- Arthritis medications that add to weight gain
- Other health conditions, such as heart or lung disease
- No access to a gym or support
- Not knowing where to start

About 40% surveyed have worked with a healthcare provider to lose weight, but just as many have not discussed it with their doctor.*

DOES ANYTHING WORK?

If you've struggled to lose weight, you're not alone. Many people with arthritis have tried different approaches with mixed results.

Our survey participants said working with a dietitian and using medication were the two most effective tools they had used to lose weight.

If you're trying to lose weight but haven't seen results, you might want to talk to your doctor about all of your options. For many people, working with a dietitian and finding a form of physical activity you can stick with can make a meaningful difference. For some people, a weight-management medication may be another helpful tool. While medications don't replace healthy habits, they can provide extra support on your weight-loss journey.

Because these are medications, it's important to work closely with your doctor.

WHAT ARE WEIGHT-MANAGEMENT MEDICATIONS?

These medicines can help with weight loss by reducing hunger, helping you feel full longer, lowering craving or changing how the body processes food. They include GLP-1 receptor agonists (commonly called GLP-1s), such as semaglutide, tirzepatide and similar medicines. Other weight-management medicines include fat-blockers, antidepressants and appetite suppressants.

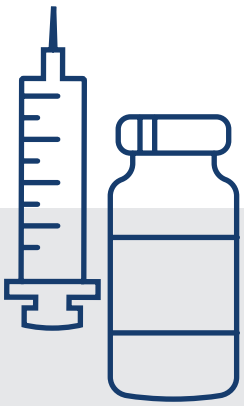
Most people using a weight-management medication said it was a type of GLP-1. About two-thirds of those taking any kind of weight-management medication said it was moderately to extremely effective. But more than half stopped taking it, mostly because of side effects or cost. The most common side effects were stomach-related issues, plus constipation, diarrhea and dizziness

If you are considering adding a weight-management medication to your weight-loss plan, a conversation with your healthcare provider is a great place to start. Here are a few questions to ask:

- Could I benefit from weight-management medication?
- What side effects should I know about?
- Could my arthritis or any medications I'm taking influence how this treatment works or how I respond to it?
- If I start taking this medicine, what should I expect?
- What other measures should I be taking?
- How soon might I see results?
- What signs or symptoms should I call you about right away?
- How long will I need to stay on this medicine?

EFFECTIVE WEIGHT LOSS METHODS

A weight-management medication might help you reach your goal weight, but it works best as part of a broader approach to health. Healthy eating and regular physical activity, especially with one-on-one or group support, can help improve overall health and manage arthritis symptoms. Together, these strategies can improve overall well-being, reduce stress on your joints and help you stay active and independent for longer.



25% of those in the survey said they have tried a weight-management medication.*

**Healthy Weight Management: A report on the arthritis patient experience. Arthritis Foundation survey, April 2026*

This content was developed independently by the Arthritis Foundation with support from Lilly and Novo Nordisk.

Find more weight-management resources at arthritis.org

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