

## Can Weight Loss Drugs Cause Hair Loss? Experts Explain

Experts explain if drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy can cause hair loss.



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- *Anecdotal reports are coming in linking weight loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy to hair loss.*
- *Experts explain the potential link between weight loss and hair loss.*
- *Doctors explain what to do if you're experiencing hair loss amidst weight loss.*

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Drugs like [Ozempic](#) and [Wegovy](#) have gotten a ton of attention over the past few months after [reports](#) surfaced of celebrities using the drugs to lose weight. While they may seem like a quick fix to drop pounds, like with any prescription medication, they come with their own list of side effects—nausea, vomiting, and upset stomach topping the list (though “[Ozempic face](#)” is another buzzy topic). Now, anecdotal reports are coming in of hair loss as a side effect of these weight loss drugs.

“Anyone lost most of their hair with Ozempic?” one person wrote on [Reddit](#). “Talked to doc several times about it but they keep telling me the drug does not cause hair loss.”

It's important to note that hair loss isn't mentioned as a common side effect of semaglutide, the active ingredient in both [Ozempic](#) and [Wegovy](#). (Instead, the maker of each medication notes that people are more likely to have gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, diarrhea, and stomach pain.)

So, can Ozempic and other weight loss drugs cause you to lose your hair? Doctors explain what you need to know.

### Is hair loss a side effect of Ozempic and Wegovy?

Hair loss is not listed as an official side effect of [Ozempic](#) or [Wegovy](#). Novo Nordisk, the company that makes both medications lists the following as potential side effects of [Ozempic](#):

- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Constipation

The following are also potential side effects of Wegovy:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach
- Dizziness
- Feeling bloated
- Belching
- Gas
- Stomach flu
- Heartburn
- Runny nose
- Sore throat

As for hair loss, while it's not listed as an official side effect of semaglutide and therefore Ozempic and Wegovy, experts say it can happen. "Hair loss can be a side effect of these medications but it most commonly occurs with any kind of significant weight loss," says Mir Ali, M.D., a bariatric surgeon and medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, Calif.

## **Can weight loss cause hair loss?**

It can, actually—but it doesn't happen to everyone. "We see it commonly with our weight loss surgery patients as well," Dr. Ali says.

But...why? "The condition is known as telogen effluvium, where a physical stress to the body shocks the hair follicles, resulting in rapid shedding," explains Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital. "This is the same phenomenon seen in women after childbirth."

Telogen effluvium happens "due to hair follicles falling out when they don't get enough nutrition," says Gary Goldenberg, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist practicing in New York City. "When hair follicles don't get enough nutrition, they go into the telogen phase of growth and fall out," he adds. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) specifically points out several factors that can be related to weight loss that can lead to hair loss. Those include stress and having too little biotin, iron, protein, or zinc.

As for these medications, classified as GLP-1 agonists, in particular, there really isn't anything about semaglutide that would cause hair loss, says Jamie Alan, Ph.D., an associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology at Michigan State University. Instead, she says, the hair loss is likely because of not taking in enough nutrients or the right nutrients during the weight loss process.

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Emily Aboujaoude, Pharm.D., clinical assistant professor at the Rutgers University Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, agrees. “Sudden weight loss [by any means] is associated with a loss of nutrients and vitamins,” she says. “Low levels of iron, zinc, protein, selenium, essential fatty acids, and amino acids can lead to hair loss, though it may take months to show.”

## **Can you prevent hair loss when losing weight?**

It depends on a few factors. “There’s no way to completely prevent it but there are ways to minimize it,” Dr. Ali says. He recommends making sure you get “adequate nutrition,” including having plenty of protein in your diet.

“Avoiding restrictive diets that cut out entire food groups, and incorporating a balanced amount of all nutrients is the best way to go,” Aboujaoude says. “Additionally, for those who follow a vegetarian or a vegan diet, it is recommended to supplement the diet with nutrients such as iron and zinc. If the hair loss is caused by nutrient deficiency, supplementation will help with hair regrowth.”

You could also try taking a supplement like biotin, Dr. Ali says, although he notes that there isn’t enough research to definitively say if it will work.

## **Will hair grow back after stopping weight loss drugs?**

It should, and likely will, grow back after your weight levels off, whether you continue with the medication or not, Dr. Ali says.

“New, stronger hairs replace weaker hair over the next six to 12 months,” after your weight levels off, Dr. Goldenberg says. “Therefore, in most patients, telogen effluvium is temporary.”

If you’re struggling with hair loss after losing weight—whether due to a medication or not—and it bothers you, Dr. Goldenberg recommends consulting a dermatologist. “I’ve used regenerative techniques to prevent or decrease hair loss from weight loss or pregnancy with treatments such as platelet-rich plasma, with good success,” he says. “It is important to start regenerative treatment as soon as one notices hair loss, to prevent more shedding and to encourage regrowth.”

But again, your hair should start to come back on its own in time. Hair loss “resolves usually within a year, so long as you are eating a well-balanced diet and are ingesting adequate caloric intake,” Dr. Zeichner says.