

Ozempic skin side effects are more common than you think

You started Ozempic to improve your health. But for many people, the changes don't stop at the number on the scale. Dry skin, acne, [hair thinning](#) and the hollowed appearance nicknamed "Ozempic face" are among the most common appearance-related concerns people notice during rapid weight loss, according to the [American Academy of Dermatology](#) (AAD).

Why GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic affect your skin, hair and nails

Much of what happens to your skin, hair and nails on a GLP-1 comes down to the dramatic changes happening elsewhere in your body. Because these medications suppress appetite, most people eat less — which can make it harder to get enough [protein, vitamins and other nutrients](#) needed to support healthy skin and hair, says [Dr. Gary Goldenberg](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. [GLP-1 side effects](#), like nausea, can also make people drink less water. "That reduced fluid intake can show up as dry, dull-looking skin," adds [Dr. Cindy Wassef](#), a dermatologist at Premier Health Associates in Randolph, N.J.

Many of the appearance-related changes people associate with GLP-1 drugs like [Ozempic and Wegovy](#), however, are less about the medications themselves than the rapid weight loss they often produce. "These skin, hair and nail changes can happen with any significant weight loss, whether it's through medications, surgery or other means," says [Dr. Mir Ali](#), medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, Calif.

Rapid weight loss reduces both the fat beneath your skin and the collagen and elastin that help keep it firm and plump, according to the [Cleveland Clinic](#). As facial fat diminishes, features can appear more hollow, while lower collagen and elastin levels contribute to sagging, wrinkles and looser skin. All of this together "can cause loss of facial volume — 'Ozempic face' — skin laxity, dryness and wrinkles," says Goldenberg. "While these changes are most pronounced on the face, they can also be seen in other parts of the body, including neck and buttocks, with sagging and wrinkling."

GLP-1 medications may also contribute to [hormonal and metabolic changes](#) that can affect rapidly growing tissues like hair and nails. That "can lead to hair thinning and hair loss, brittle nails and sensitive, dry or irritated skin," Goldenberg says.

The most common skin, hair and nail changes on GLP-1 drugs

While there aren't any hard-and-fast numbers on how many people experience skin changes as a result of using GLP-1s yet, the [AAD](#) does affirm that "GLP-1 drugs can have significant impacts on your skin." The organization lists the following as known consequences — and the dermatologists we spoke to say they're seeing them in their offices:

There aren't yet any hard-and-fast numbers on how many people experience appearance-related changes while taking GLP-1 medications. But the [AAD](#) says these drugs "can have significant impacts on your skin," and dermatologists say they're seeing many of the same concerns in their practices. The most common include:

- Sagging or loose skin
- Loss of facial volume ("Ozempic face")
- Wrinkles and crepey skin
- Dry or sensitive skin
- Skin irritation or increased reactivity
- Acne breakouts
- Hair thinning or hair loss
- Brittle nails or slower nail growth
- Injection-site reactions

What exactly is "Ozempic face" — and what can help?

"Ozempic face" is the nickname for the hollowed cheeks, looser skin and more noticeable wrinkles that can develop after rapid weight loss. And for some people, the change is striking. In a small [2025 imaging study](#) published in *Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*, researchers estimated that every 22 pounds of weight loss was associated with roughly a 7% reduction in midfacial volume.

Fat loss isn't the whole story, though. Researchers are also investigating whether GLP-1 medications may affect the cells responsible for collagen production, potentially contributing to facial aging, according to a [2025 review in Endocrine](#). "Rapid weight loss — whether from medication or on its own — accelerates facial aging more than almost anything else," says [Dr. Joshua Zeichner](#), director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital.

While you [can't completely prevent Ozempic face](#), dermatologists say losing weight more gradually — about one to two pounds per week — may help minimize the changes. They also recommend:

- Eat a [nutrient-rich diet](#).
- [Prioritize protein](#) to help you build muscle as you lose fat.
- [Stay hydrated](#) to support overall skin health.
- Wear a [broad-spectrum sunscreen](#) daily.
- Commit to an exercise regimen.
- Upgrade your skin care. Experts at [Philadelphia's Jefferson Health](#) suggest ingredients like [retinoids](#), [vitamin C](#), [peptides](#) and [hyaluronic acid](#) work synergistically to keep your skin healthy during weight loss.

"[Collagen supplements](#) may also help," says Goldenberg. "In-office procedures like dermal fillers, collagen stimulation and skin-tightening can be used too."

Facial volume is just one of the appearance-related changes people notice on GLP-1 medications. For others, the bigger surprise is that their skin starts breaking out.

Can Ozempic cause acne — or actually help it?

It depends. Some people taking GLP-1 medications develop new breakouts, "especially those with acne-prone skin," Goldenberg says, likely because of the hormonal and metabolic changes that can accompany rapid weight loss.

But there's also [evidence that GLP-1s may improve acne for some people](#). A 2026 study in [Cureus](#) that followed 110 [semaglutide](#) (known under the branded names of Ozempic and Wegovy) users for two years found that acne severity declined over the course of treatment. Researchers suggested that improvements in BMI, blood sugar and insulin levels may have played a role. But it's worth noting that the study didn't have a control group, so more rigorous research is still needed.

For now, "the relationship is unclear," says Wassef. Whether your skin improves or breaks out may depend on what's driving your acne in the first place.

How to care for dry or sensitive skin on GLP-1s like Ozempic

If your skin suddenly feels drier while taking a GLP-1 medication, dehydration may be part of the problem. Nausea can make it harder to drink enough fluids, and eating less may also mean you're getting fewer nutrients that support a healthy skin barrier. Dermatologists recommend:

- **Stay hydrated.** Aim for [11.5 cups \(2.7 liters\) to 15.5 cups \(3.7 liters\) of water](#) per day.
- **Switch to a gentler cleanser.** Wassef recommends options like [Cetaphil](#) or [CeraVe](#) that won't strip your skin of its natural oils.
- **Layer in hydrating ingredients.** "Products with hyaluronic acid like [Neutrogena Hydro Boost](#) can also help with hydration since hyaluronic acid is able to hold onto lots of water," Wassef says. She also recommends [La Roche-Posay Lipikar AP+M Triple Repair Moisturizing Cream](#) for the face and body because it contains ceramides and niacinamide.
- **Use a ceramide-rich moisturizer daily.** "Use [moisturizers](#) that contain ceramides and antioxidants," says [Dr. Chang Son](#), founder of SCN Dermatology. [CeraVe Skin Renewing Night Cream](#) is a Yahoo editor favorite that fits the bill.
- **Consider PDRN if your skin needs extra support.** Son also recommends [products containing polydeoxyribonucleotide \(PDRN\)](#), which are "barrier repairing and also contribute to cellular regeneration." In other words, they help repair the skin barrier while supporting new cell growth. (After six months of testing, Yahoo beauty editors recommend [Rejuran Turnover Ampoule c-PDRN](#).)
- **Don't forget your nails.** Brittle nails and slower nail growth can happen alongside rapid weight loss because of nutrient changes and hormonal shifts, Goldenberg says. The [AAD recommends](#) moisturizing your cuticles regularly to help prevent splitting and breakage.

Hair loss on GLP-1s: What to know

Rapid weight loss on GLP-1 medications can trigger [telogen effluvium](#), a common type of temporary hair loss that typically begins a few months after a major physical or emotional stressor. "Because of the shock of the body, hair follicles are converted away from an active growth phase, leading to shedding," Zeichner says. "The good news is that this hair loss will correct itself, even if untreated, over several months to even up to a year."

While there's no quick fix, supporting healthy hair growth can help. Zeichner recommends eating a well-balanced diet with plenty of protein to give hair follicles the nutrients they need to function properly. "If needed, additional [nutritional supplements](#), such as [vitamins](#) or [biotin](#), may also be beneficial while taking GLP-1 medications," Son adds. But don't start supplements blindly: The [AAD](#) notes they're most likely to help only if bloodwork shows you're actually deficient.

Want to dive deeper? Read our full guide to [GLP-1 medications and hair loss](#) to learn why it happens, how long it lasts and when it's worth seeing a dermatologist.

Bottom line

Skin, hair and nail changes are among the most common appearance-related concerns people report while taking GLP-1 medications. The good news? Most are temporary, manageable or both — especially when you address them early. "In general, it's a good idea to work with a dermatologist from the beginning when starting GLP-1 inhibitors, both from an aesthetic and medical perspective, as some expected changes can be more easily prevented or treated with early intervention," Son says. "When concerns such as acne, hair loss or skin sensitivity become more chronic, dermatologic treatment and intervention may be necessary."

FAQs

Does everyone get Ozempic face?

No. But facial changes are common enough that the [American Academy of Dermatology](#) says people taking [Wegovy](#), [Ozempic](#), [Zepbound](#) and other GLP-1 medications are likely to notice changes such as loss of facial fullness, sagging skin and a crepey texture. The biggest factors are how quickly you lose weight, your age and your skin's natural elasticity, Goldenberg says. Working with a dermatologist early may help minimize those changes before they become more noticeable.

Can you reverse Ozempic face?

Sometimes. The best strategy is prevention: Losing weight more gradually — about one to two pounds per week — may help reduce facial volume loss. If you're already noticing changes, Goldenberg says treatments like dermal fillers, collagen-stimulating procedures and skin-tightening treatments may help restore a fuller appearance.

Will Ozempic-related hair loss grow back?

In most cases, yes. Hair shedding linked to GLP-1 medications is usually telogen effluvium, a temporary type of hair loss triggered by rapid weight loss. Some dermatologists also recommend FDA-approved minoxidil ([Rogaine](#)) to encourage regrowth. (Learn more about the [best hair growth products](#).)

Are skin changes from GLP-1 drugs caused by the medication or weight loss?

For the most part, they're related to the weight loss itself. "Most of these changes are caused by the weight loss itself, along with secondary effects such as metabolic and nutritional changes that can occur with rapid weight loss," Son says. "The direct effects of GLP-1 inhibitor medications on skin cells remain unclear."

Can GLP-1 drugs help skin conditions like psoriasis?

Maybe. Early research suggests GLP-1 medications can help reduce the inflammation involved in conditions like psoriasis and hidradenitis suppurativa, particularly in people who also have obesity or diabetes. But the medications aren't FDA-approved to treat either condition, and experts say more research is needed. For a closer look at the evidence, read our [full guide to Ozempic and skin conditions](#).

Meet our experts

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- [Cindy Wassef](#), MD, dermatologist at Premier Health Associates in Randolph, N.J.
- [Mir Ali](#), MD, bariatric surgeon and medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, Calif.
- [Joshua Zeichner](#), MD, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City

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