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The Next Generation of Weight-Loss Drugs Is Reshaping People's Looks—And Not in a Flattering Way

'Reta face' is very real.

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WHEN YOU LOSE weight through traditional diet and exercise, you tend to see a gradual slimming down of your face. But when you add in gray-market peptides like retatrutide, you're expediting the weight loss process. That also includes rapid fat loss in the face, leaving a sunken and hollowed-out look people are dubbing "reta face."

Online Reddit communities on peptides and biohacking are packed with people commenting on changes to their facial appearance after taking retatrutide—a triple hormone agonist of the GLP-1, GIP, and glucagon receptors that's expected to become the next generation of weight-loss injections. One clinical trial found those taking retatrutide had more than double the weight loss of people taking Ozempic.

To be fair, "Ozempic face" has also been an issue. But with Eli Lilly expected to apply for FDA approval of retatrutide in early 2027 for obesity and other conditions, doctors say reta will likely cause more facial volume issues. Is there any way to prevent these unflattering side effects? We went straight to the doctors currently treating people with facial symptoms from GLPs.

What Does Reta Face Look Like?

WHILE RETA FACE isn't an official medical diagnosis, it's a real phenomenon. "The facial changes can be kind of dramatic," says Mir Ali, MD, medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center. But the lack of criteria has also caused some debate over what qualifies as reta face.

On the r/BodyHackGuide community (with over 87,000 contributors dubbed "Lab Rats"), reta face before-and-after posts are recurring discussion threads. Some describe reta face as a chiseled look after weight loss while Ozempic face is the more sickly face. Others argue that "reta face" and "Ozempic face" are simply two terms to describe the sunken look from your face losing fat.

"Reta face is the new Ozempic face," says dermatologist Gary Goldenberg, MD. "Since retatrutide is a triple biologic agonist that produces more significant weight loss than GLP peptides, patients may have an even more exaggerated appearance of a sunken, aged look."

That means cheeks can become flat and hollow, temples narrow, and undereye areas can look sunken and dark. “Facial bones can also become more prominent as fat disappears,” says Dr. Goldenberg. “The skin can thin, as collagen and elastic fibers have less underlying fat plumping them up.”

Joshua Zeichner, MD, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital, says the shape of your face changes with any significant weight loss—it’s just more apparent when someone is on weight-loss medication.

Is Reta Face Preventable?

ABSOLUTELY. DR. ZEICHNER says minimizing the appearance of facial wasting is all about losing weight slowly—even when taking a GLP-1 or reta. While you can’t target specific areas for fat loss, Dr. Goldenberg recommends pacing yourself while still getting plenty of protein on your plate and being selective about meals that have enough nutrients.

If you already have reta face and the appearance bothers you, Dr. Goldenberg recommends seeing a dermatologist. “Collagen stimulators and fillers are a very common treatment for this problem,” he says. “Volume can be restored and contouring can be improved with these treatments.”