GLP-1 receptor agonists are a class of type 2 diabetes medications used along with diet and exercise to lower blood glucose.

How are they given?
Given as an injection: inserted into the fat under your skin

How do they work?
• Help your pancreas to make more insulin: insulin helps to lower blood glucose
• Lower the amount of glucose made by your liver
• Help to slow down the breakdown of your food: this slows down increases in blood glucose

What are the benefits?
• Modest weight loss
• May make you feel less hungry and more full
• There is a low risk of hypoglycemia (blood glucose that is too low) with GLP-1 receptor agonists. Hypoglycemia can cause tiredness/weakness, nervousness, shakiness, confusion, fast heartbeat, problems with vision, and fainting or seizures

What are the side effects?
Most common:
• Diarrhea
• Nausea
• Reactions/itching at the injection site
• Vomiting
• Headache
• Indigestion
• Constipation

Also possible:
• Thyroid tumors, including cancer, were seen in rats and mice in studies during the medication testing process
• Inflammation of the pancreas (acute pancreatitis)
• Hypoglycemia if taken with a sulfonylurea or insulin
• Kidney problems (renal impairment)
• Allergic reactions

GLP-1 receptor agonists are short for glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists.

Four GLP-1 receptor agonists are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA):
• Albiglutide (TANZEUM™)
• Dulaglutide (TRULICITY™)
• Exenatide (BYETTA®)
• Exenatide extended release (BYDUREON®)
• Liraglutide (Victoza®)

GLP-1 receptor agonists are FDA approved for use along with diet and exercise to lower blood glucose in adults with type 2 diabetes. These medications are not FDA approved for weight loss.

For informational purposes only. Consult full manufacturer’s prescribing information and medication guide for medication’s uses, actions, and side effects. The medications discussed are approved for use in the United States by the U.S. FDA.


Your healthcare provider will partner with you to create a type 2 diabetes management plan that is personalized to your needs and preferences.

Take any medications as directed by your healthcare provider and tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects.