

MEMBER HANDOUT • MEDICATION

Success on Oral Weight-Loss Medication

READ THIS FIRST

Your medication is a tool — it works best when you give it the right conditions. This guide walks you through how to take it correctly, what to expect in the first month, the habits that make it work, and when to call your care team.

1 KNOW YOUR MEDICATION

Find the medication you're taking. If yours isn't listed, ask your coach for a supplement to this guide.

Rybelsus oral semaglutide

WHEN TO TAKE IT

Once a day, in the **morning on an empty stomach**. Wait **at least 30 minutes** before you eat, drink anything but water, or take other pills.

FOOD RULE

No food. Take with **no more than 4 oz (½ cup) of water**. Coffee, juice, and other drinks block the medication from working.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Nausea, feeling full quickly, decreased appetite. GI symptoms usually improve after the first 1–2 weeks or after each dose increase.

Phentermine Adipex, Lomaira

WHEN TO TAKE IT

Once a day, **in the morning before 10 a.m.** Taking it later in the day can keep you awake at night.

FOOD RULE

You can take it with or without food. Drink plenty of water — dry mouth is common.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Increased energy, decreased appetite, dry mouth, trouble sleeping. Your heart rate may run slightly higher.

Contrave naltrexone + bupropion

WHEN TO TAKE IT

You'll start with **1 tablet in the morning**, then increase over 4 weeks to **2 tablets in the morning and 2 in the evening**. Space doses at least **8 hours apart**.

FOOD RULE

Take with food to reduce nausea — but avoid high-fat meals, which can cause a fast release of the medication.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Nausea, headache, constipation, sometimes vivid dreams or mood changes. Most side effects fade within 4 weeks.

Qsymia
phentermine + topiramate

WHEN TO TAKE IT	Once a day, in the morning . Your provider will slowly raise your dose over several weeks.
FOOD RULE	With or without food. Stay hydrated — this medication can increase your risk of kidney stones and dehydration.
WHAT TO EXPECT	Tingling in hands and feet, taste changes (soda often tastes flat), dry mouth, trouble finding words. Do not use if you are pregnant or planning pregnancy.

2
HABITS THAT MAKE IT WORK

The medication does about half the work. These four habits do the other half.

1

Protein first, every meal
Your appetite will drop fast. When you do eat, aim for **30 grams of protein at breakfast** and a protein source at every meal — eggs, Greek yogurt, chicken, fish, beans. This prevents muscle loss and hair thinning.

2

Water, even when you're not thirsty
The medication reduces the thirst signal along with hunger. Aim for **at least 64 oz of water a day**. Dehydration is the #1 reason members feel dizzy, tired, or headachy on these medications.

3

Move every day
Aim for **30 minutes of activity daily** — walking counts. If your provider approves, add **strength training 2–3 days a week**. Movement protects the muscle you don't want to lose and doubles the medication's effect.

4

Sleep is not optional
Aim for **7–9 hours per night**. Poor sleep raises hunger hormones and undoes what the medication is doing. If your medication affects your sleep (like phentermine), take it as early as possible.

3
WHAT TO EXPECT THE FIRST MONTH

Week 1	You may notice appetite changes within a few days. Mild nausea, headache, or fatigue is common as your body adjusts. Focus on small, protein-forward meals and lots of water.
Week 2	Side effects usually start to ease. You may forget to eat — set reminders. Weight often drops 1–3 lbs, mostly water at first.

Week 3	This is where routine matters. Same time each day. Protein at breakfast. Water bottle in reach. Weight loss typically settles into a 1–2 lb per week pace.
Week 4 & beyond	If your dose is being increased, side effects may briefly return — this is normal. Bring your logs and questions to your monthly coach visit.

4 WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

CALL YOUR CARE TEAM RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You can't keep fluids down for more than 24 hours
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Racing heart, or blood pressure spikes above 140/90
- New mood changes, depression, or thoughts of self-harm
- Dark urine, dizziness, or no urination for 8+ hours (signs of dehydration)
- You become pregnant or are trying to become pregnant

5 IF YOU MISS A DOSE

Rybelsus	Skip it. Do not double up. Take your next dose the following morning.
Phentermine	If it's before noon, take it. If it's past noon, skip it — taking it late will keep you up at night.
Contrave	Skip the missed dose. Do not take two tablets at once to catch up. Resume your normal schedule.
Qsymia	If it's before midday, take it. If it's later, skip and resume the next morning.

If you miss more than 2 doses in a week, call your care team before restarting.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Coach tip. Keep a short daily log — time you took the medication, protein at breakfast, water intake, movement, and any side effects. Bring it to every monthly visit. Members who track these five things lose **twice as much weight** as members who don't.