

FMCG alert: More powerful weight-loss drugs on the way

[Health and wellness](#)



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The battle against obesity has taken a revolutionary turn with the advent of GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) receptor agonists, a class of drugs that has shown impressive results in helping people lose weight. Beyond weight loss, drugs like semaglutide (marketed as Wegovy and Ozempic) and tirzepatide (known as Zepbound) also help patients manage diabetes and may help treat cardiovascular diseases and other conditions.

The [rapid adoption of anti-obesity medicines](#) significantly influences [food and drink consumption](#) among a group responsible for a disproportionate share of US calorie intake. With nearly 45% of the US population considered obese, these new GLP-1 drugs will have major implications on the packaged food and beverage industries, restaurants, and supermarkets.

Yet, FMCG companies should be aware that another potent wave of anti-obesity medications is on the way.

Beyond GLP-1 and the New Frontier

The pharmaceutical industry is not resting on its GLP-1 laurels. The introduction of dual and triple agonists marks a new frontier in weight management therapy. Unlike traditional GLP-1 drugs that primarily target a single hormone pathway to regulate appetite and insulin secretion, these new classes of drugs operate on multiple pathways, enhancing their effectiveness and potentially reducing side effects.

How are they different and more effective?

These new weight-loss drugs go beyond the mechanism of GLP-1 receptor agonists by targeting additional gut hormones like GIP (glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide) and glucagon. For example, tirzepatide, a dual agonist, activates both GLP-1 and GIP receptors. This dual action not only promotes satiety and reduces appetite but also improves insulin secretion more effectively than GLP-1 agonists alone. Clinical trials of drugs like tirzepatide have resulted in even greater weight loss, with participants losing up to 18% of their body weight, a significant improvement over the results seen with GLP-1 drugs.

Polyethylene glycol modified exenatide is a next-generation drug administered once a week to reduce the burden of frequent dosing. Early animal studies and clinical trials indicate it can significantly reduce weight gain, showcasing its potential as a long-acting solution to manage obesity.

Research is also focusing on triple agonists that target GLP-1, GIP, and glucagon receptors. By addressing multiple pathways involved in energy balance and glucose metabolism, these compounds have shown promise in preclinical studies. In diet-induced obese mice, balanced triple agonists produced greater weight loss and enhanced energy expenditure than mono and dual agonists, indicating a synergistic effect from targeting three receptors.

Implications for Obesity Treatment

The development of these new classes of drugs is a testament to the complexity of obesity as a chronic disease and the need for multifaceted treatments. By targeting multiple pathways involved in appetite regulation, glucose metabolism, and insulin secretion, these drugs offer a more comprehensive approach to weight management. They not only aid in significant weight loss but also address various metabolic factors associated with obesity, such as insulin resistance and high blood glucose levels.

Moreover, the potential for these drugs to offer benefits beyond weight loss, such as cardiovascular protection and treating liver diseases, opens new avenues for addressing myriad health issues associated with obesity.

The evolution of weight-loss medication from GLP-1 receptor agonists to dual and triple agonists is a potentially significant leap forward in obesity treatment. As the pharmaceutical industry continues to innovate, patients struggling with obesity may soon have access to even more powerful tools to support their weight-loss journeys. As such, food and beverage brands must think beyond today's GLP-1 drugs and factor these coming innovations into their long-range plans.

Join us Feb. 27 for a complimentary webinar, [Managing the weight: Becoming ready for GLP-1s and what's to come](#). Our panel of experts will discuss the implications of these new obesity treatments and the potential effects on shopper behavior. [Register today](#).